INSIDE: THE NEW EA STRIKE GAME – EXCLUSIVE PICS!

MEAN MACHINES SEGA

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SATURN EXCLUSIVE

OLYMPIC GAMES & OLYMPIC SOCCER

GOING FOR US GOLD

ULTIMATE MK3

REVIEW!

ROAD RASH PREVIEW

HELL FOR LEATHER!

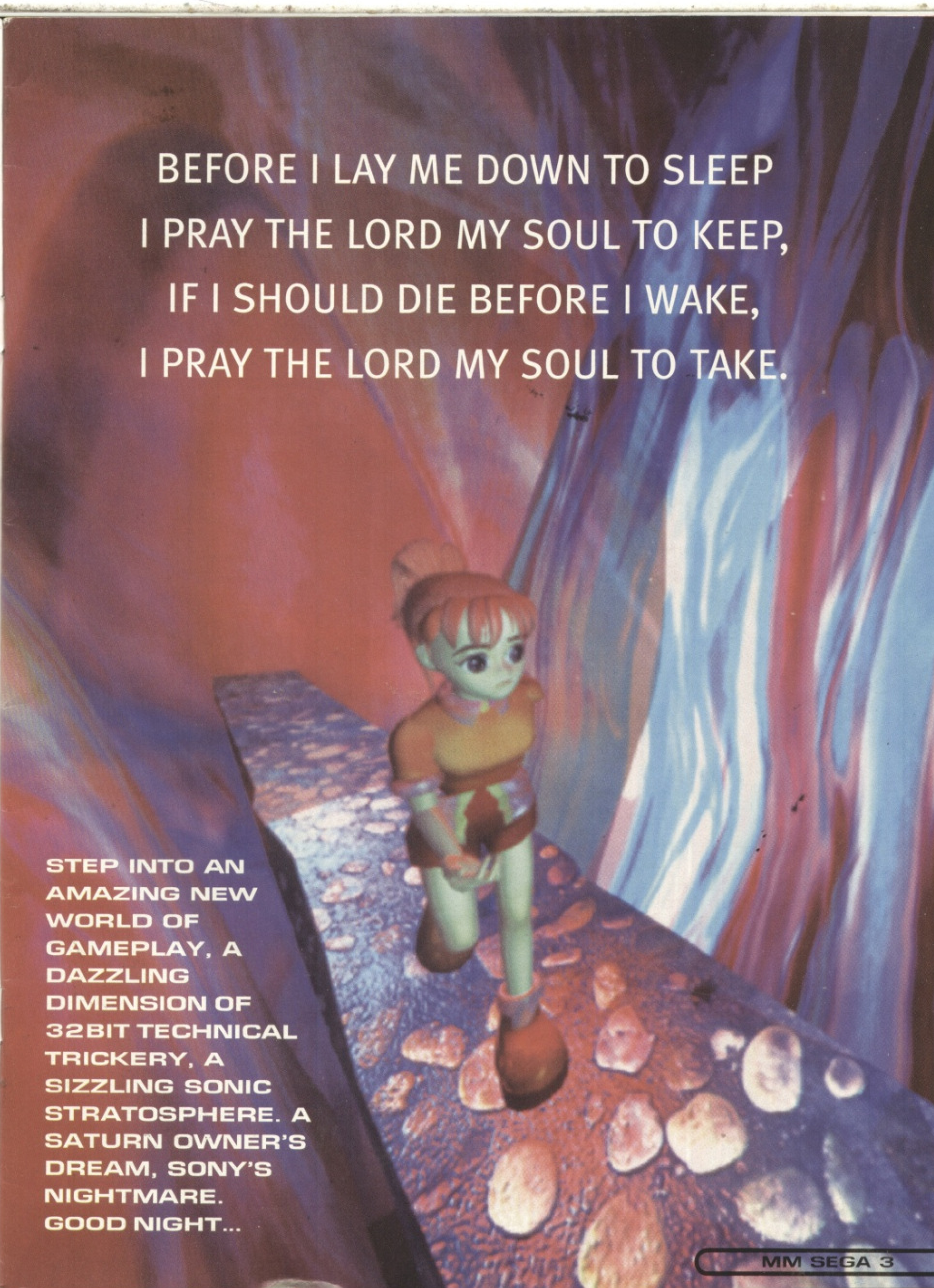
THE MOST AMAZING 32-BIT GAME EVER!



NIGHTS!

FOUR EXCLUSIVE PAGES IN YOUR OFFICIAL MEAN MACHINES SEGA


I'VE GOT THIS EARLY MORNING ROUTINE.
OXY AND OXYCUTE 'EM! ARE TRADE MARKS.
I CLEAN MY FACE WITH OXY DAILY WASH EVERY MORNING BECAUSE I DON'T WANT SPOTS. IT CLEARS MY PORES OF THE MUCK AND GREASE THAT CAUSES THEM. SPOTS? OXYCUTE 'EM!
ANTIBACTERIAL ACTION
HELPS PREVENT SPOTS
OXY
DAILY FACE WASH
Sensitive
ANTIBACTERIAL ACTION
HELPS PREVENT SPOTS
OXY
DAILY FACE WASH


BEFORE I LAY ME DOWN TO SLEEP
I PRAY THE LORD MY SOUL TO KEEP,
IF I SHOULD DIE BEFORE I WAKE,
I PRAY THE LORD MY SOUL TO TAKE.
STEP INTO AN AMAZING NEW WORLD OF GAMEPLAY, A DAZZLING DIMENSION OF 32BIT TECHNICAL TRICKERY, A SIZZLING SONIC STRATOSPHERE. A SATURN OWNER'S DREAM, SONY'S NIGHTMARE. GOOD NIGHT...

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PREVIEWS



EDITORIAL

PLANETARY SHIFT

Now we're into the show season, last month saw the ECTS show in London. Although the show was pretty boring overall, the attitude to the Saturn had changed remarkably since last autumn, when third-party Sega games were thin on the ground and Sony was talk of the town. Although we won't pretend that the Playstation doesn't exist at MEAN MACHINES, the current evidence is that the big games producers are taking the Saturn deadly serious. I must have counted about 30 new projects planned for this year from UK software houses alone, stuff like Quake, Deathtrap Dungeon, QAD and UEFA Champions that there just hasn't been space to talk about, and just think about Heart of Darkness coming first on Saturn. This month's news section is exceptional, even for us. The news is also good for Sega. The recent price drop led to an upsurge in demand for Saturn, and the prospects for Christmas will be bolstered with the thought of VF3 coming this year, Fighting Vipers, Virtual On, and of course, Nights. I am going to the BIG SHOW: E3 in Los Angeles, and the magazine goes to press a day after it closes. This means that next month, MEAN MACHINES will have all the major releases of '96 detailed before any other mag in the world. Frightening but true — just don't miss it.

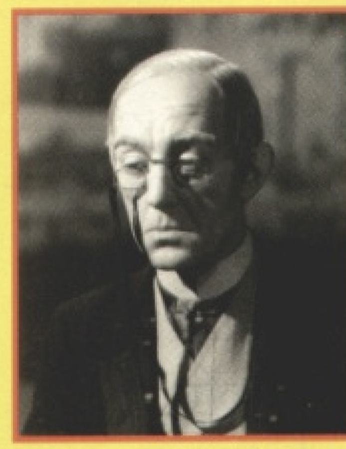
GUS



MEAN MACHINES PHONE PESTS

Don't get us wrong – 99.9% of our readers are excellent individuals who we would be happy to conduct lively and intelligent conversations with. There is, however, a mind-numbing minority. A core of persistent phone callers who either send us to sleep with boredom or send us up the walls in frustration...





PRINCE HARRY

"I have interrupted my morning Earl Grey to raise a matter of the most pressing urgency with you. While browsing through Sega Saturn Magazine I noticed an advertisement for a new periodical called Gamespotting, and I was pondering whether you were the originators of this promising new venture." Erm, sorry Lord Snooty but you were reading an advert for the next issue of MMS that we made in the style of the Trainspotting movie poster. Sorry if that wasn't blatantly obvious.

BLAKE'S 5?

We tune our TV dials to UK Gold, and turn the hands of time back to a halcyon age of, er, classic science fiction...



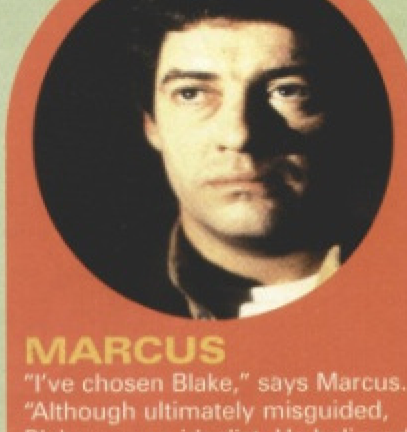
GUS

"I've chosen evil baddy Servalan for my Blake's 7 lookalike character," purrs Angus. "I admire her ruthlessness, Machiavellian ambition and fabulous frocks. And I think I've got the hair for it." The evil Federation's Supreme Commander terrorised Blake's freedom fighters (editorial staff?) through four years of spacebound drama – essential viewing in the Swan household. "Blake's 7 was only challenged by Space:1999. That programme's use of Lycra was years ahead of its time, even if all their television sets were black-and-white."



CLAIRE

"Everyone reckons I'm a dead ringer for sexy space smuggler Jenna," says a dubious Claire, who is admittedly lacking in the necessary crushed velvet platform boots. "Blake's 7 wasn't the best telly sci-fi though. My favourite Doctor Who episode was the one with the giant spider [Planet of the Spiders – broadcast 1974] and the scariest Star Trek was the one with the flying pizzas that stuck to people's backs [Operation Annihilate – first broadcast 1970]." Educated guesses of Claire's true age are invited at the editorial address.



MARCUS

"I've chosen Blake," says Marcus. "Although ultimately misguided, Blake was an idealist. He believed that dignified resistance would topple Servalan's Federation (but not editorship), and he never wavered in his struggle to stamp out corruption and evil. There are obvious similarities between his character and mine – we are kindred spirits treading the same path towards truth, honour and justice." Which is odd really, because everyone else thought the resemblance ended with them both being a bit fat.

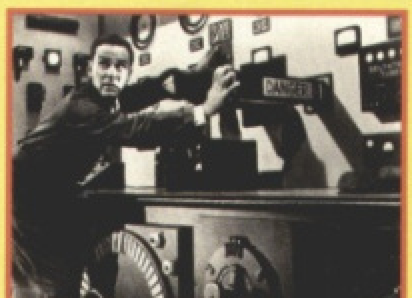
MR. MELBOURNE



"G'day from the land of Oz." Well it was a good day until you rang up mate. His calls have become as regular, and as predictable, as Neighbours. They go something like this. (Dials number) "Hello, can I speak to MEAN MACHINES please blue?" (Get's put through) "Do you review PSX games?" Yes, he still hasn't grasped the fact that we are a Sega magazine. He hangs up...then calls Saturn mag too. ASK FOR PLAYSTATION PLUS AT RECEPTION, OK?

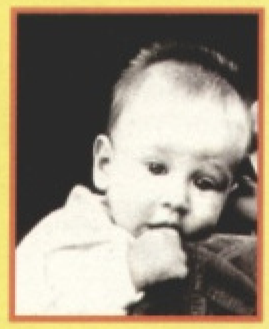
MR. M2

As much as we love our foreign readers, some of them are one song short of a musical. Take the Dutch bloke we've dubbed Mr M2. Don't ask us how, but someone has drilled it into his head that the M2 add-on for the 3DO is coming out for the Saturn. Stupid enough in itself, but when he phones up every fortnight to ask when it's coming out his obsession creeps into madness. "Hellooo...I vonder if...you can tell...me when M...2 iz coming out for ze Sat...u..r..n.." Never. Sod off and pick a tulip.



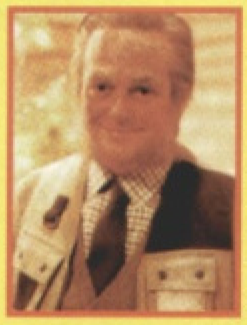
Mr M2 dreams of the day he'll insert his Saturn into his expansion slot. But alas, it'll forever remain a dream.

CRY BABY



This little chap phones up asking for tips on ancient games like Talespin, Talmit's Adventure and Micro Machines. Then, after we tell him no-one in the BUILDING has the cheats, he phones C&VG and Saturn mag who are on the same floor as us, asking them exactly the same thing. But because Saturn mag don't cover Megadrive games any more, they put him back through to us! And to top it all off, he always sounds like he's going to piss his pants and cry. I think he must know how we feel when we talk to him.

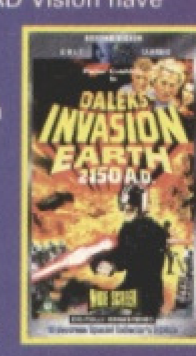
BOB FLEMING



"Good Evening, cough cough, Bob Fleming here, cough. with more banal questions, cough, to the MEAN MACHINES, cough, team." Basically, this bloke rings us up one afternoon with a whole list of questions to ask but, like the spluttering gardener from The Fast Show, can't get more than three words out at a time before coughing his bloody guts up. God knows what the end of his phone must look like when he's finished on it. Let's just hope it's fitted with a phlegm pump.

FREEBY FRENZY

The classic widescreen movie Daleks Invasion Earth 2150AD is released on Warner Bros/ Beyond Vision home video on 13 May. We have five copies to give away – simply tell us the name of the Doctor's time/space machine and if your correct answer is lucky enough to be picked out of the hat you'll win a tape and save yourself £12.99. Address all entries to us, marked EGG WHISK.



Japanese animation supremos AD Vision have given us five copies of their latest action video, Gunsmith Cats, directed by Anime master Kenichi Sonoda. As well as giving away 5 tapes, which go on sale 6 June at £12.99, each of our lucky winners will also receive a giant Gunsmith Cats 'goo gun'. Simply tell which famous Sega character stars in his own cartoon series. Address all entries to us, marked COOL CATS. All entrants must be aged 15 or over.





LUCY

"Blake's 7 is very special to me for two reasons," says Lucy. "Firstly, I had a massive crush on Avon – I thought he used to look dead sexy in all that black leather. Secondly, every other episode looked like it was filmed in Newcastle – all that concrete makes me quite homesick." Lucy has selected telepathic alien beauty Cally as her Blake's 7 lookalike. "My favourite part of Blake's 7 wasn't a particular person, however, it was the spaceship. A design triumph, both inside and out. Even if you could see the strings holding it up."



STEVE

"Er, what's Blake's 7?" asked Steve, who opted for a picture of an evil Federation guard. Mr Key's taste in TV sci-fi is a bit more up to date, his current faves being The X Files and Star Trek:The Next Generation. "I prefer to watch my special effects state of the art, not state of the ark." While pondering this curious attitude, we were, however, bemused to notice that a saucy Gillian Anderson poster had been torn out of his recent copy of a well-known men's magazine. "It had an X Files episode guide on the back!" he protested.

GAMES DECATHLETES

DALEY THOMPSON
Steve 'Whitley Bay' Merrett
SEB COE
Angus 'Anthea and Emma' Swan
SALLY GUNNEL
Claire 'Play Doh' Coulthard
ROGER BLACK
Marcus 'no milk today' Hearn
DIANE MODHAL
Lucy 'popular, apparently' Hill
STEVE BACKLEY
Steven 'Arkwright' Key

FREELANCE VAULTERS
Dave 'Potty Pigeon' Kelsall
Jaime 'bleached' Smith

SERGEI BUBKA
Harry Attrill
FLO JO
Liza Merrett
ZOLA BUDD
Tina Hicks

SPECIAL THANKS TO: Susie Hamilton for a lovely dinner, Shan for her immaculate powers of organisation and cake, Andy Bebop and all at Silicon Dreams for much assistance.

EDITORIAL ARENA:EMAP Images Ltd, Priory Court, 30-32 Farringdon Lane, London EC1R 3AU
TELEPHONE: 0171-972 6700
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PRINTING BY: Cooper Clegg
COLOUR: Sarah-Jane Leavey, Gary Lord and Sarah Best
DISTRIBUTION: BBC Frontline
PRINTED IN THE UK

COVER: Image supplied by Sporting Pictures.

IMPORTANT: This issue's competition entries must reach us by 17 June 1996.

SUBSCRIPTION & BACK ISSUE ENQUIRIES
TOWER PUBLISHING
TOWER HOUSE
SOVEREIGN PARK
LATHKILL ST
MARKET HARBORO
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LE16 9ET
TEL: 01858-468888

SUBSCRIPTION RATES (12 ISSUES INC P&P)
United Kingdom and BFPO: £30.00
Overseas Surface Mail: £36.00
Airmail Europe and Eire: £42.00
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Back issues UK: £3.50 each
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COMPETITION RULES
Employees and suppliers of EMAP IMAGES and their relatives are not eligible for competitions. There is no cash alternative for any of the prizes on offer. And you can forget those multiple entries too, fella!

MEAN MACHINES SEGA use Dolby Surround Sound to test out all featured software.

DOLBY SURROUND

NEWS

STRIKE'S BACK!

SOVIET STRIKE

BY: EA

SATURN

RELEASE: NOVEMBER

ORIGIN: USA

What so many of you have been waiting for: EA announce the next in the Strike series. Soviet Strike has a November release date, and by EA's own admission will be their most important release of the year. Not surprising, as the Desert, Jungle and Urban Strike trio are some of the biggest-grossing games in history. These pictures of early work show EA cannily taking a revolutionary overhead perspective, rather than slavishly going for the 3-D cockpit angle expected of 32bit. It doesn't look any less spectacular for it. We're promised an explosion of details within an issue or so, so don't miss it!









This month's news is virtually all exclusive because we were at the ECTS show, where a raft of Saturn projects were anounced, practically transforming the software outlook overhead. Now salivate over these Soviet Strike pics.

MEAN MACHINES

VARIOUS GAMES

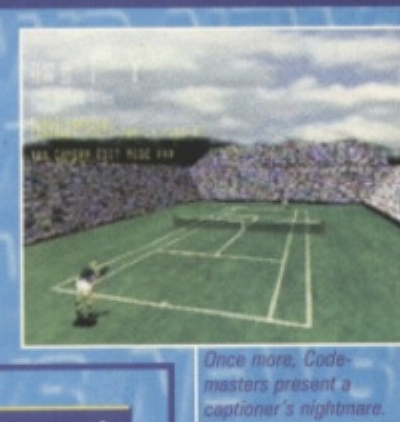
BY: CODEMASTERS

SATURN

RELEASE: LATE '96

ORIGIN: UK

Although no official announcement has been made, MEAN MACHINES has obtained the document that reveals Codemasters' dynamite plans for Saturn. Only approval from Sega is required to bring a clutch of games from the Leamington firm who have dominated Megadrive sales over the last year. Get a load of: Micro Machines 3(D), Pete Sampras Extreme and Ultimate Skidmarks, all before November! Since relations between us and the firm are so good they're practically sexual, expect all the details, including a planned game diary for Micro Machines 3!



Once more, Codemasters present a captioner's nightmare. As if cricket wasn't bad enough, tennis checks in for a second round of 'tenuously linked funnies' angst. Oh well... strawberries, short skirts, you cannot be serious etc.

KEY

competition · new game · japan news · tipped for the top · exclusive news · film news · news update · arcade conversion · gossip · british development





QUANTUM LEAP

AWESOME SPEC. OF VIRTUA FIGHTER 3 UNVEILED

VIRTUA FIGHTER 3

BY: SEGA (AM2)

MODEL 3

RELEASE: DECEMBER

ORIGIN: JAPAN

As first reported in last month's news, Sega are moving the goalposts of arcade standards once again with Virtua Fighter 3. A machine specification reveals the Power PC chip at the heart of the CPU.

As mesmerising as the computing power was the demo of the first new character set to appear in the game. Aoi Umenokouji is an alabaster-skinned Japanese beauty, dressed in ceremonial kimono, who performs her Aikidou arts with the poise of a dancer (indeed, a motion-captured dancer assisted in the realisation of Aoi).

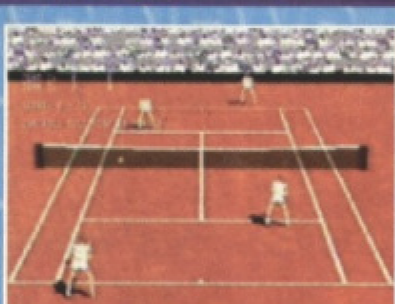
Aoi's beauty contends with the stunning embodiment of Dural, now spectacularly, reflectively metallic and more impressive in motion than the million-dollar special effects of the T1000 from Terminator 2. Breaking down the gulf between pre-rendered sequences and realtime polygon generation is Model 3's Real Time C.G system. Any perspective, however close to the character, can be viewed without loss of resolution quality.













ROAD RAGE

VARIOUS GAMES

BY: CODEMASTERS

SATURN

RELEASE: LATE '96

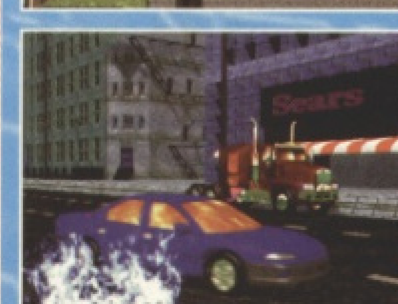
ORIGIN: UK

Much lauded coders DMA – Scotland's finest – are producing a wicked little game for BMG: Grand Theft Auto. From the creators of Lemmings comes a game that can only be described as a delinquent mutation of Micro Machines. Viewed overhead with unfussy graphics, you steal cars, vans, ambulances, anything with wheels and an engine. If anyone happens to be behind the wheel, drag them out and shoot them.

The early version already shows a crowd of pedestrians being mowed down as a VW Beetle mounts the kerb. Disgraceful. We obviously want to inspect this kind of filth very carefully







SHAKEN TO THE CORE

TOMB RAIDER

BY CORE

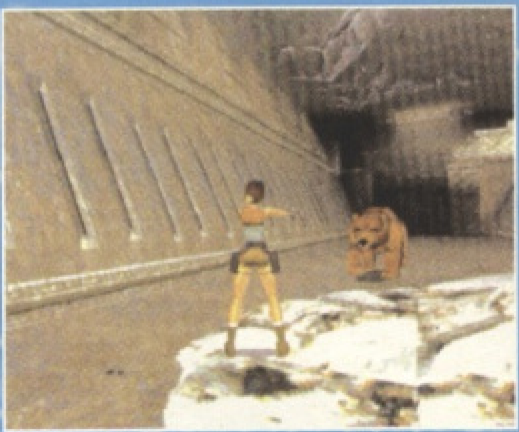
SATURN

RELEASE: AUTUMN '96

ORIGIN: UK



Core Design showed the outstanding development of the recent ECTS show, in our opinion, in the form of Tomb Raider, a radical true 3-D adventure game. The game features a pneumatic heroine, Lara Croft, who explores some of the world's most mysterious ancient ruins, equipped only with a pair of desert boots, twin pistols and a very tight pair of hot pants.



The game itself is hot, and not pants. The game's dungeons, pyramids, corridors and palaces are viewed through an amazingly solid 3-D generator, with an intelligent camera viewing from dramatic, but playable angles . There is none of the fogging, or nasty pop-up of other games. Tomb Raider looks like matching the best technical development for the Saturn to date, including Sega's own work.





Witness the amazing non-shaded out 3-D that makes Tomb Raider the hot property it is.



NINJA

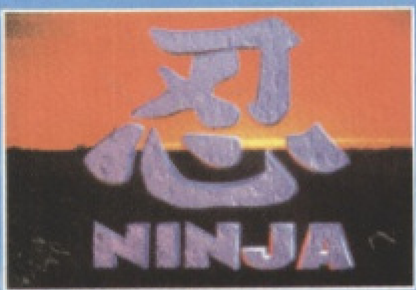
BY CORE

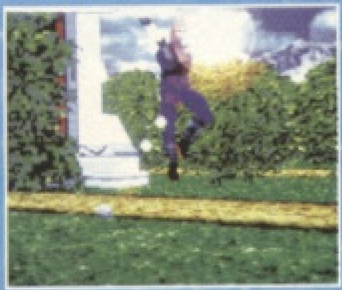
SATURN

RELEASE: SUMMER '96

ORIGIN: JAPAN

Core kept a surprise development, Ninja, from the journos until the ECTS event. MEAN MACHINES was the first to view this stunning new slant on the beat 'em up. Set in the times and landscapes of an oriental feudal fantasy, the brave young Kuwosawa fights polygon samurai, towering lizards and to be perfectly frank, large monsters. The graphics are pretty incredible, with a chunky, isometric 3-D of admirable detail even at close range, including spectacular architecture which leaps out of the screen at you. Core are planning a late summer release for this very exciting game.







The very first pictures of Ninja in its early form — but the game is expected before September. These monsters move as good as they look.





GRUESOME TWOSOME

FIRO AND KLAWD

BY BMG

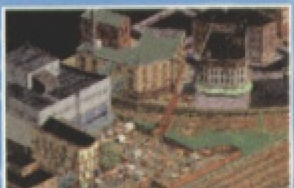
SATURN

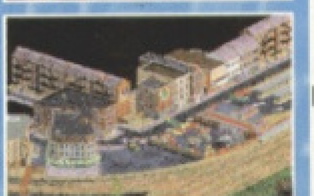
RELEASE: OCTOBER '96

ORIGIN: UK

The Oliver Twins, arch-creators of the Dizzy games, and their new Interactive Studios label are behind a novel pairing for BMG's isometric shoot 'em up puzzler, Firo and Klawd. The strange title refers to the two player characters, who are a minor gangster cat and a law-enforcing orang-u-tan. They spend the game (it's one or two player) traipsing the urban jungle, avoiding the mob and returning fire when necessary. It's an ambitious project with some great graphics, and we'll be interested to see how it develops.













DARKNESS DESCENDS

An electrifying demonstration of Sega's new found status with third-party developers is the announcement that Virgin's biggest game, and longest development, Heart of Darkness, is to appear on Saturn ahead of other formats. Apparently the Sega version is at least as advanced as any, and will be ready within six months. Heart of Darkness has been in production for over three years, it's a massive adventure that takes games like Delphine's Flashback leaps forward – a true interactive movie.

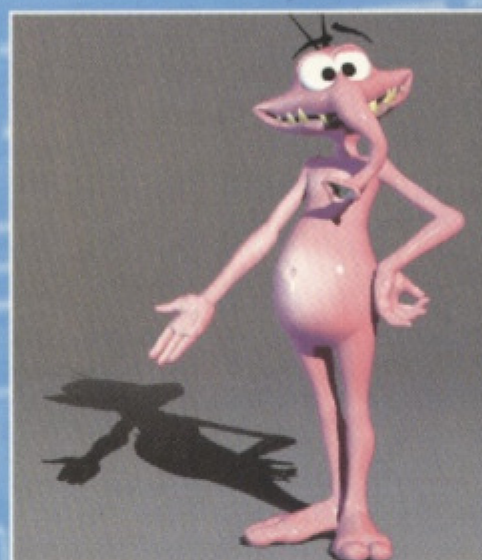
HEART OF DARKNESS

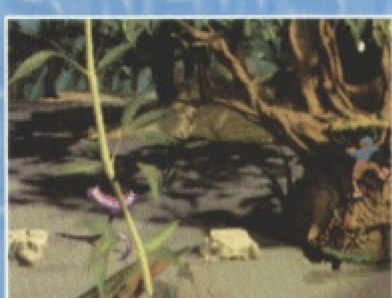
BY VIRGIN

SATURN

RELEASE: SEPTEMBER

ORIGIN: USA

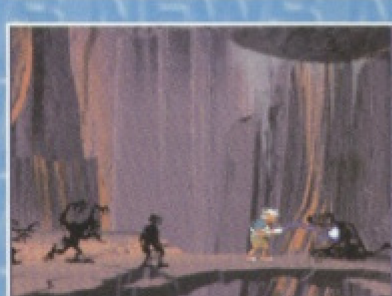












CROWN JEWELS

JEWEL OF THE ORACLE

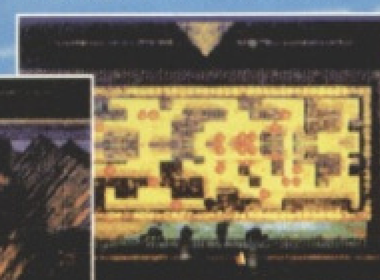
BY SUNSOFT

SATURN

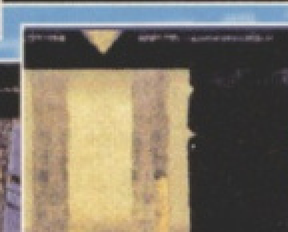
RELEASE: JUNE '96

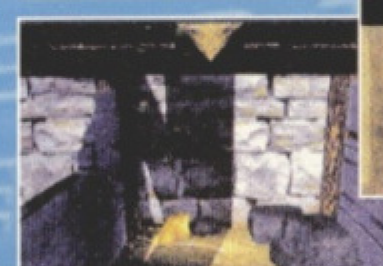
ORIGIN: JAPAN

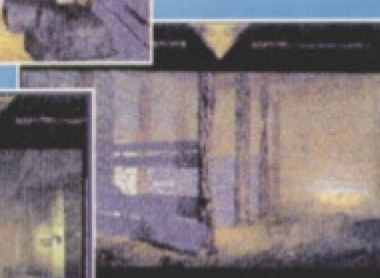
Sunsoft make a welcome return after Hebereke, with a Myst-style rendered adventure Jewel of the Oracle, set for a surprisingly close June release. MEAN MACHINES briefly played this smart-looking adventure game, which mixes high-resolution locations with logic and pictoral puzzles. Rather than a collection of stills, the locations animate into each other. We very much expect an intriguing review next month.

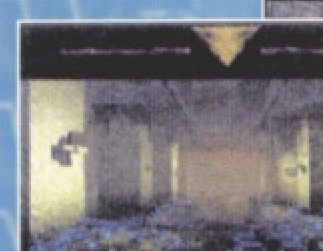














SHOW US YOUR DICK!



Dastardly, that is. Dick Dastardly is the star of a brilliant new Ocean game concept called Pandemonium. It's a point-and-click adventure (ie Discworld, Blazing Dragons) based around the wonderful world of Hanna Barbera and their immense catalogue of cartoon characters. Ocean, the holy church of licensing, have apparently bought rights to every conceivable character from The Flintstones, to Snagglepuss, Scooby, Shaggy, Huckleberry Hound and the whole Wacky Races crew (even Barney and Betty Rubble's pet canary). The soundtrack is even being recorded by some of the original cast.

- PANDEMONIUM
- BY OCEAN
- SATURN
- RELEASE: LATE '96
- ORIGIN: UK

GOS

Warning, gossip overload! The ECTS show last month, while full of vacant men in suits, did throw up a veritable hoard of prospective Saturn software. Along with the other Codies goodies, the Saturn's first Rugby game is planned, and true to previous big licensors like Pete Sampras and Brian Lara, they're gunning for the big name endorsement. Can't say, but think Pizza. And next to Sega, who are really pleased with the effect of their price-cut. HMV is now selling twice as many Saturns.

But the only blot on the landscape is football. And the possibility of, shall we say, a Victory own Goal. The follow-up to IVG is due near Christmas, and strangely enough, Sega don't want anybody saying its super at the moment. Oh well, Ocean are not so bashful, whispering they have a football game based on Sega's Virtua Striker machine. Not official, but just like it. A MEAN MACHINES rep went along to see Perfect, the creators of Discworld, and perpetrators of the Wipeout conversion. They're working on Discworld II at present, and are keen to share with you the travails of a conversion house. We're planning to join forces and bring you the gritty story of the unglamorous task of making a Playstation game function on a Saturn. Sorry to everyone and their games who didn't even get a mention this month, but it's tough at the top.

TAKE THE TUBE

- TUNNEL B1
- BY OCEAN
- SATURN
- RELEASE: LATE '96
- ORIGIN: GERMANY

Ocean have signed German designers Neon to create three contrasting games on multi-next generation formats (including Saturn). The most advanced, and undoubted star is Tunnel B1, an underground shoot 'em up based around some incredibly realised 3-D environments. You battle through a subterranian realm hoping to destroy a superweapon protected by the labyrinth's defences. This looks beaut, and a full report from our German-bound correspondent is due next month. Well, Rad's going to see them.









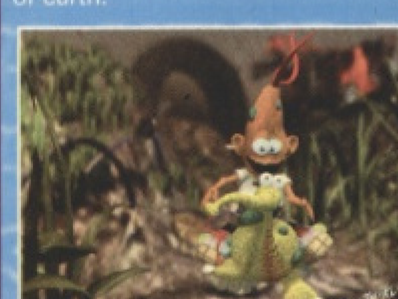




SNIFF MY DUMP

Philips Media are most definitely into Saturn, with up to five titles available this year (including a conversion of Burn:Cycle). The Biggie is Down in the Dumps, a surreal adventure game set on a rubbish tip, and featuring some of the best rendered art seen on computer. It's all a bit Toy Story, with a plot and characters to unfold across four chapters as thumb-sized aliens try to escape from their stinky sector of earth.

- DOWN IN THE DUMPS
- BY PHILLIPS
- SATURN
- RELEASE: LATE '96
- ORIGIN: UK





CREAM OF SEGA

OFFICIAL CHARTS © ELSPA   COMPILED BY CHART TRACK

Your essential monthly guide to the movers and shakers on the official national charts of Megadrive and Saturn sales, as well as a summary of your opinions about the games that matter (or will matter) to you. Thanks to our good friends at Chart Track, and the software supremos ELSPA, we bring you another generous helping of number crunching info. Numbers in brackets indicate last month's chart positions. Here's the best, the rest, and a few spins from the bin...

HYPE CHART

What you, and we, are most looking forward to.

1 (-)
DARK SAVIOR
This is going to be a bit special. We're excited.

2 (-)
DESTRUCTION DERBY
Wins the readers' vote.

3 (5)
MANX TT
Enthusiasm is still strong.

4 (3)
ALIEN TRILOGY
Another hotly anticipated readers' fave.

5 (-)
FIGHTING VIPERS
Perhaps the most eagerly awaited coin-op conversion.

BE AN OPINION FORMER

Our ongoing lists of readers' faves is becoming more and more popular. Each month we list the games you most want and those you are looking forward to. Just fill in the coupon. Also, take a guess at what the most popular game of the month will be. One of those smart enough to guess the top of the reader's chart will win a copy of that game! Congratulations to last month's winner, Patrick Hayes from Brighton.

MY TOP THREE SATURN GAMES ARE:

I'M MOST LOOKING FORWARD TO:

I PREDICT THE MOST POPULAR GAME WILL BE:

NAME:
ADDRESS:

Send to: Cream of Sega, MEAN MACHINES SEGA, EMAP Images Ltd, Priory Court, 30-32 Farringdon Lane, London EC1R 3AU.

SALES CHART: SATURN

Chart Track's guide to the top-selling CDs.

1 (-)
WIPEOUT (Psygnosis)
The Playstation conversion steals pole position.

2 (10)
VIRTUA COP (Sega)
Fresh stocks of guns help boost sales.

3 (1)
SEGA RALLY (Sega)
Outgunned by some strong competition.

4 (-)
MAGIC CARPET (Electronic Arts)
A new entry for this Turkish delight.

5 (4)
FIFA SOCCER '96 (Electronic Arts)
Still the only real footy option.

6 (3)
VIRTUA FIGHTER 2 (Sega)
The Saturn's top-selling beat 'em up. For now.

7 (8)
D (Acclaim)
Things that go bump in the night...

8 (6)
WORMS (Team 17)
Still smart, despite our disastrous performance in the office league.

9 (2)
F1 CHALLENGE (Sega)
"And Hill finishes second! Again!"

10 (7)
FIRESTORM: THUNDERHAWK 2 (Core)
This chopper fest hovers on the brink.

ELSPA

SALES CHART: MEGADRIVE

Chart Track's guide to 16-bit sales.

1 (-)
TOY STORY (Sega)
Superb game meets competitive discounting.

2 (1)
FIFA SOCCER '96 (EA)
Displaced by a cloth cowboy and a slinky dog.

3 (2)
SONIC AND KNUCKLES (Sega)
The plug-through cart's smart.

4 (3)
SONIC 2 (Sega)
Classic platform fun with our spiky blue buddy.

5 (5)
MICKEY MANIA (Sony)
Still shifting from beyond the bin.

6 (6)
ECCO 2: THE TIDES OF TIME (Sega)
Better than a fart in the bath. Nearly.

7 (10)
PSYCHO PINBALL (Codemasters)
Zany multi-ball fun with Miss Flipper.

8 (-)
AUSTRALIAN RUGBY LEAGUE (Electronic Arts)
A new entry for upside down rugger.

9 (-)
PRIMAL RAGE (Time Warner)
Let's hope they all picked it up cheap.

10 (4)
TAZMANIA: ESCAPE FROM MARS (Sony)
Oh dearie dearie me.

ELSPA

OFFICE CHART SATURN

Our choice of next generation titles.

1 (1)
PANZER DRAGOON ZWEI
It's German. Or something.

2 (3)
WIPEOUT
Plays like a beast.

3 (-)
ULTIMATE MORTAL KOMBAT
Steve's Capcom-toppling fave.

4 (-)
EURO '96
A FIFA beater in everyone's opinion.

5 (4)
MAGIC CARPET
Gus's epic journey continues.

READERS CHART SATURN

Your choice of the best Saturn titles.

1 (2)
SEGA RALLY
Back in top gear.

2 (1)
VIRTUA FIGHTER 2
The connoisseur's beat 'em up.

3 (-)
VIRTUA COP
Big comeback now you're all armed.

4 (-)
FIFA SOCCER '96
And what, precisely, is a bicycle kick?

5 (-)
WORMS
Clearly don't only emerge when wet.


their only crime was curiosity
HACKERS
12
UNITED ARTISTS PICTURES presents An IAIN SOFTLEY film 'HACKERS' JONNY LEE MILLER ANGELINA JOLIE
FISHER STEVENS and LORRAINE BRACCO music by SIMON BOSWELL edited by CHRISTOPHER BLUNDEN MARTIN WALSH
production designer JOHN BEARD director of photography ANDRZEJ SEKULA executive producer IAIN SOFTLEY co-producer JANET GRAHAM
UNITED INTERNATIONAL PICTURES
written by RAFAEL MOREU produced by MICHAEL PEYSER RALPH WINTER directed by IAIN SOFTLEY
soundtrack available on Edel-Cinerama Records
read the paperback from COLLINS CHILDREN'S BOOKS. visit the 'HACKERS' site on the internet HTTP://WWW.UIP.COM
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AT A CINEMA NEAR YOU FROM MAY 3
CALL FREE TALKING PAGES 0800 600 900 FOR DETAILS



BRAVE NEW SEGAWORLD



Over the last few years, Sega's commitment to the arcade business has put them in the position of No.1 amusement developer. In Japan, Sega's coin-ops comfortably occupy the first, second and third place in punters' popularity. From the Scalar board cabinets of Outrun and Afterburner, to the latest million polygon Model 3 board, Sega has been out in front.

Buoyed by this success, the company has widened its vision beyond the limiting concept of the 'amusement arcade'. The ambitious concept that Sega Amusements have come up with is the Indoor Theme Park. Instead of coin-op cabinets, vast numbers of people are expected to flock to participate in interactive rides — coupling real movement, mass participation and the latest in computer generated graphics.

As you might expected, Japan was the scene of the first experiment in next-millenial mass entertainment. In 1994 Sega opened Joypolis in Yokohama. Now Sega have decided to go bigger. They are about to open a Segaworld of a size and development that even outdoes Joypolis. Not in Tokyo, or New York, or Paris. In the heart of London.



SEGAWORLD FAX
The Trocadero attracts 16m vistors annually.





THE RIDES — FIRST DETAILS!

Currently, Sega are keeping the full details of the major rides which will feature at the opening of Segaworld, but we've managed to source information on five of these mind-blowing attractions. All of these, bar the AS-1, have never been seen in Britain before!

VR1— SPACE MISSION

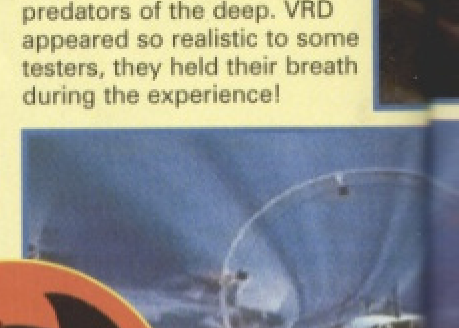
An all-new space adventure that looks incredible. Strafe huge space cruisers and enjoy interstellar visuals through the Mega Visor that put many sci-fi movies to shame!

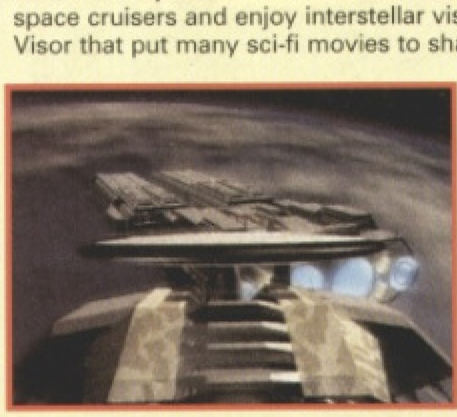


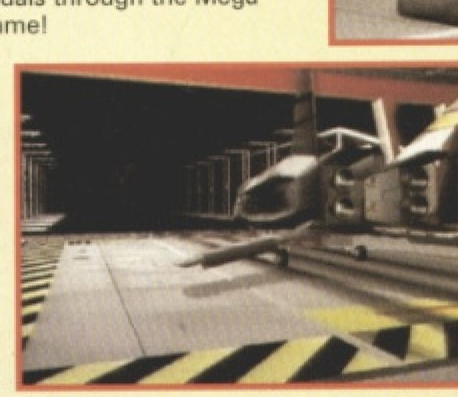
VRD — UNDERSEA ADVENTURE

The snippets of this we've seen look terrifying. Immerse yourself in a virtual reality underwater world with predators of the deep. VRD appeared so realistic to some testers, they held their breath during the experience!







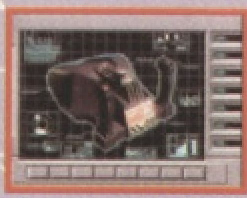




SEGAWORLD FAX
It will be unique in Europe. But Sega aim to expand to other major cities on the continent.



THE BIGGEST INDOOR THEME PARK IN THE WORLD!




SEGAWORLD™

THE TROCADERO, PICCADILLY CIRCUS, LONDON

A ROCKET TO RED HOT LOVE

Sega have chosen the Trocadero, Picadilly Circus, as Segaworld's location. It will occupy an incredible seven floors of the tiered complex, leading to a complete refurbishment of the interior into a glowing, neon-charged Theme Park of the future. All visitors are channelled into a unique rocket escalator, which whisks them directly from the second to sixth floor in an enclosed metallic tube. From there, visitors pay between £10 and £15 for entry to the Park and then make their way down through its six themed areas.



GHOST HUNTERS

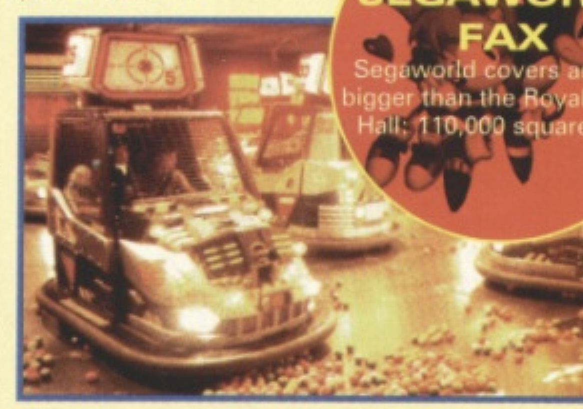
This looks like a fun game for all the family, combining 'real world' theme visuals, moving cars and virtual reality monsters superimposed onto a screen at the front of your car. Looks fab.



Don't you always feel like a berk when the attendant straps you in before the ride starts?

MAD BAZOOKA

Looks crazy and takes up a vast area, as players get into large vehicles, scoop lots of coloured balls up from the floor and fire them at each other. Dodgems with attitude — too mad!



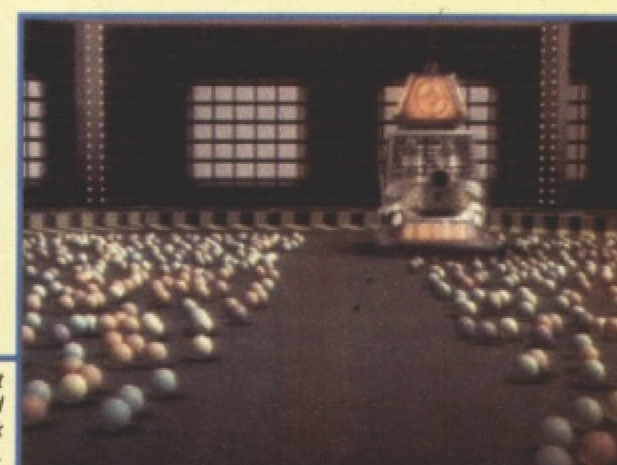
SEGAWORLD FAX

Segaworld covers an area bigger than the Royal Albert Hall: 110,000 square feet.



SEGAWORLD FAX

Sega expect 1.75 million visitors in the first year!

A simulation of what the aptly titled 'Mad Bazooka' will look like.




AS-1 SIMULATOR

This was developed by Sega just over two years ago, and is a state-of-the-art simulator ride. It is able to run game modules, and outperforms other simulators you may have been on by allowing passengers to participate.




This two-seater capsule strikes fear in the heart of spooks and spectres. Allegedly.



VIRTUAL REALITY RIDES NEVER SEEN IN EUROPE!

THE MEGA VISOR DISPLAY



The key to Sega's rides is the Mega Visor Display, a virtual reality device that allows each ride passenger to have a different experience. The rides really are virtual — by turning your head you see views to the side, back above and below, creating an effect impossible on conventional simulators.



















SEGAWORLD FAX
Segaworld represents a billion dollars of Sega's money in entertainment research.

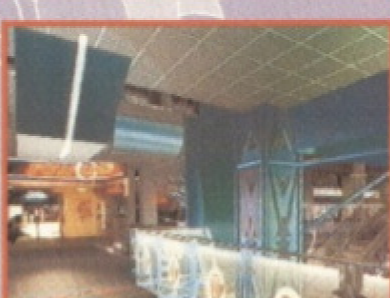


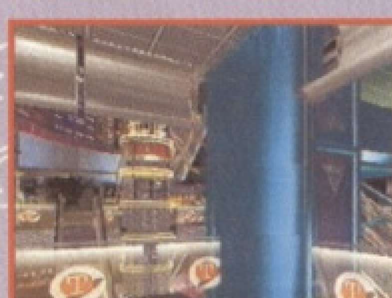


If the ride doesn't grab you, you can always pretend to be a farmhouse egg in a cardboard tray.









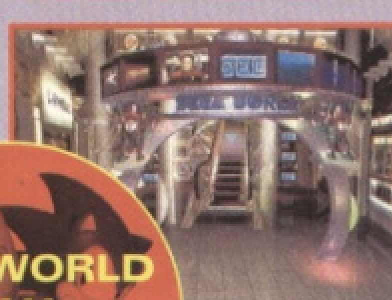




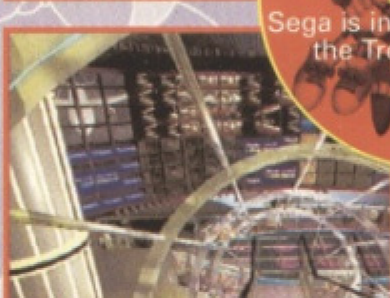
Who gave Sega permission to film Claire's house?

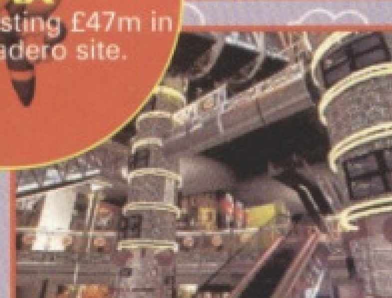
SEGAWORLD FAX
The Theme Park has a capacity of 3000.

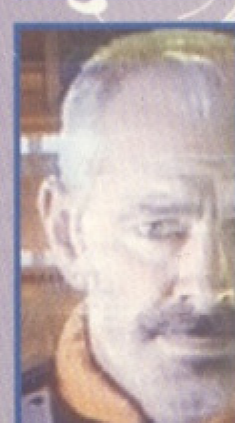




SEGAWORLD FAX
Sega is investing £47m in the Trocadero site.



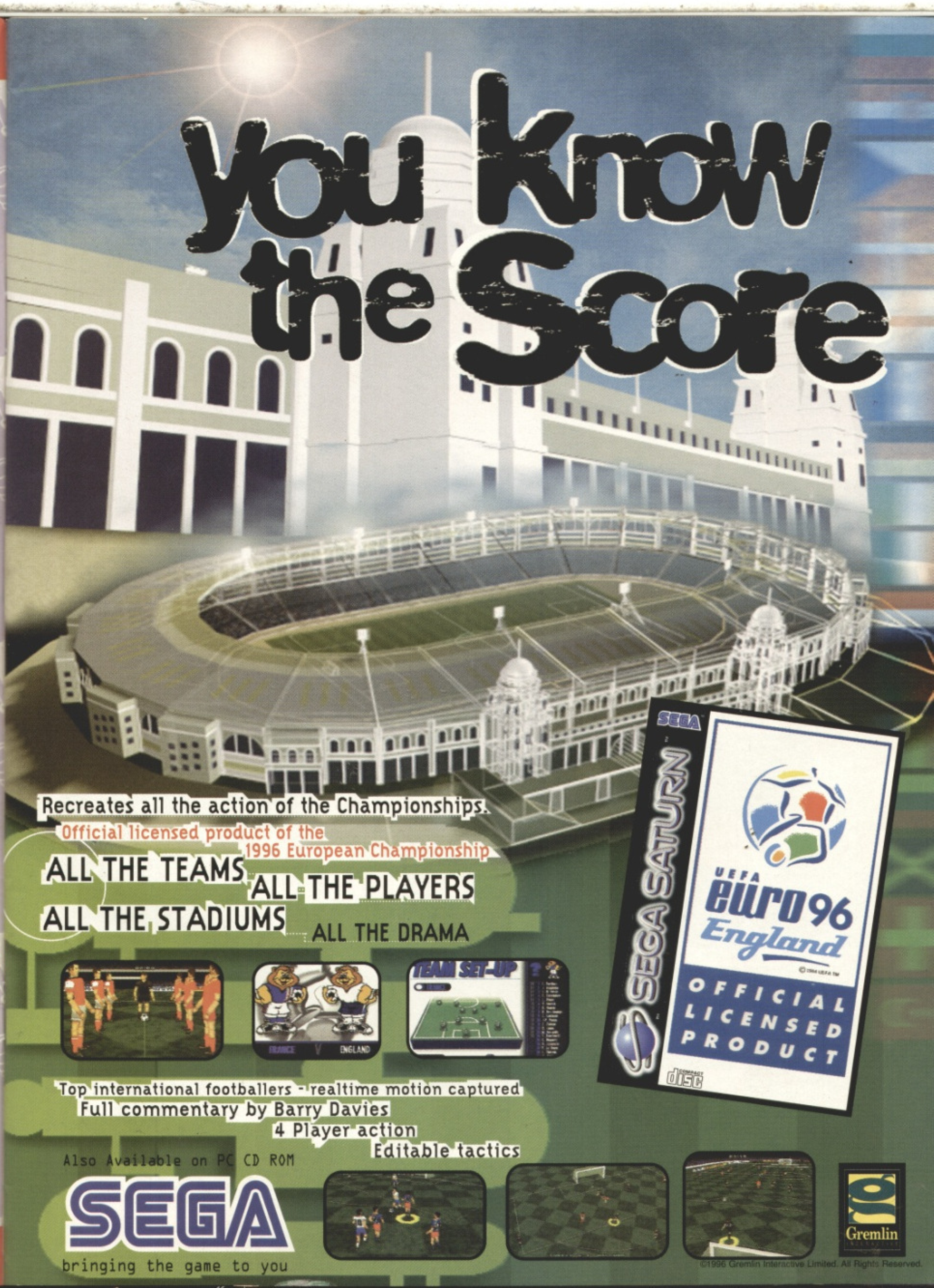




BEST OF THE BEST

Segaworld will be more than its six main rides. In each themed zone, there will be all manner of undisclosed displays, outrageous architecture and the best of Sega's amusement hardware. Take the racing zone, for example, which will feature suspended formula cars and the cream of Sega's racing games. Although Segaworld is concentrating on its unique attractions, it will also be the first staging post for Sega's new coin-ops in Europe: a gamer's paradise!

OPENS IN LONDON IN AUGUST!



You Know the Score
Recreates all the action of the Championships.
Official licensed product of the 1996 European Championship
ALL THE TEAMS
ALL THE PLAYERS
ALL THE STADIUMS
ALL THE DRAMA
TEAM SET-UP
FRANCE V ENGLAND
SEGA
SEGA SATURN
UEFA euro 96 England
OFFICIAL LICENSED PRODUCT
Top international footballers - realtime motion captured
Full commentary by Barry Davies
4 Player action
Editable tactics
Also Available on PC CD ROM
SEGA
bringing the game to you
Gremlin
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PROJECT	OLYMPIC GAMES
PUBLISHER	US GOLD
INITIATED	APRIL 95
RELEASE	JULY 98
FORMAT	SATURN
DEVELOPERS	SILICON DREAMS

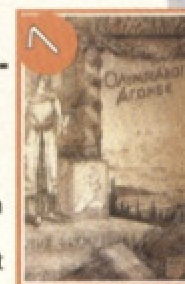
US Gold's Olympic Games originate 4000 years in antiquity. The compendium of sporting disciplines is the official game of the 26th summer games of the Modern Olympic era, to be held in Atlanta, Georgia, this July.

It will not be the first simulation of olympic events, or even US Gold's first stab at recreating the games in console form. Produced by US Gold's Silicon Dreams development arm in Banbury, Oxfordshire, the multi-player, multi-event format revives a gaming tradition. Video games compendiums of track and field events go back to the early Eighties. Most of the early attempts were unlicensed, like Activision's memorable Decathlon, conceived by its then star programmer David Crane. Decathlon featured the ten events of the Olympic equivalent and introduced a new gameplay format, which became known as the joystick waggler/ button basher. Rather than any dexterity or reflexes, success depended on sheer bloody endurance and finger strength. It was the beginning of the death of a thousand joysticks.

The real breakthrough came with two arcade games from Konami: Track and Field, whose success led to Hypersports. At much the same time, a Commodore 64 developer called Epyx embarked on a series of state-of-the-art, hugely successful multi-event games from Summer Games, Summer Games II, Winter Games and World Games.

The genre fell into disrepute, only for US Gold to revive it with a game based around the 1992 Olympics in Barcelona.

Although massively successful, it was a mixed bag in terms of quality. US Gold recognise the weaknesses in that title, which they admit was influenced heavily by the previous decade's Epyx titles. For Olympic Games, and the Saturn, they've moved into the polygon age, with 15 events, virtual views and simultaneous participation for up to eight players. And it promises to bugger a new generation of joypads.

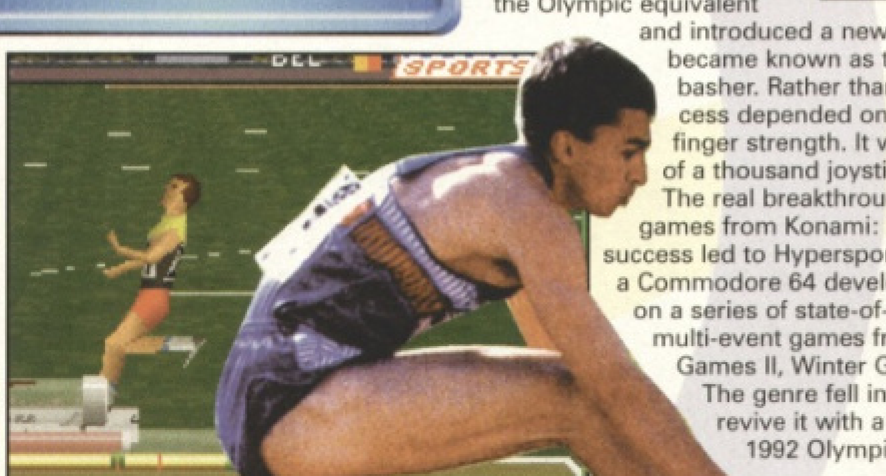


OLYMPIAD I
ATHENS 1896

The modern games was inaugurated in the newly refurbished stadium in Athens in April 1896. Fourteen nations took part. This first Olympics saw the creation of the Marathon, a racs to commemorate an epic run in Greek history.







OLYMPIAD II
PARIS 1900

These games were a damp squib, as they took place only as part of the Paris Exhibition, and it took over five months to stage the events! The facilities and organization came in for some criticism — with the athletics held next to a smelly farmer's field!

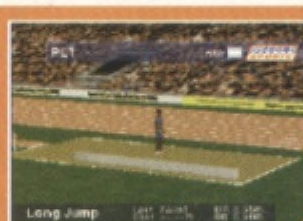


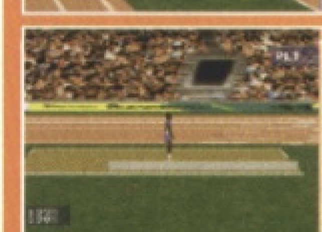
THE DISCIPLINES

There are fifteen disciplines chosen to form the Olympic Games on Saturn, grouped variously according to their action type. Originally, US Gold planned future compilations, and 25 possible events were explored to a programming stage. However, it has been decided to create a single package featuring the most effective of all events.

Atlanta 1996



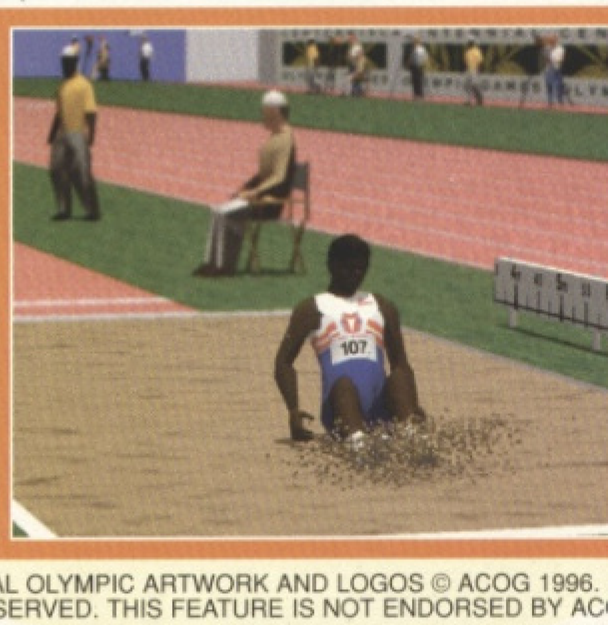




The Long Jump is portrayed with an isometric run-up.



After each attempt, the indent is measured by the judge.



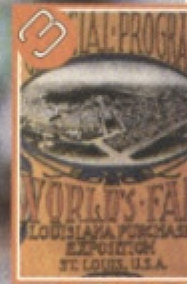
LONG JUMP

FIRST FEATURED:1896
CURRENT HOLDER:CARL LEWIS

Sprinters are usually strong in this event, which holds almost as much prestige as the dash. Technique has led to improvements of over two metres since the first Olympics.

The technique for play is quite simple, with rapid button pressing to gain speed, and another button used to launch the player at the line. Holding this down increases the angle of takeoff, which determines distance. The event takes place on a strip inside the running track.





OLYMPIAD III
ST. LOUIS 1904

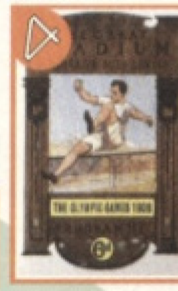
Similarly part of a world exhibition, the St. Louis games were lacklustre, with few competitors able to afford travel to Louisiana. There was a major scandal in the marathon, when one competitor was chauffer-driven from start to near the fin

HISTORY OF OLYMPIA

Historians believe the Olympics of Greek antiquity go as far back as 2000BC. Then, representatives of the city states made their way to a sacred stadium beneath Mt. Olympus, home of the Gods. Every four years (an 'Olympiad') there was a ritual five-day festival of sports, testing the prowess of Greek youth in events like discus, chariot-racing and wrestling. On the final day, the victors would be lauded with wreaths of olive. The ancient Olympics were a part of ancient society until the Christian Roman Emperor, Theodisius, outlawed any kind of Pagan ritual in 381AD.

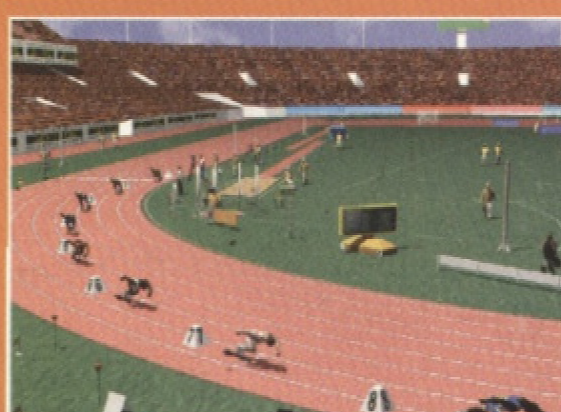
The Olympic ideal was rediscovered by the ennobled French historian and social analyst, Count Pierre de Coubertin. Coubertin's own ideas of the spiritual values of physical exercise led him to propose a revival of the Olympic Games, with a redefined Olympic ideal of international friendship, and participation on a strictly amateur basis. Representatives from a small number of nations formed the IOC, or International Olympic Committee, in 1894.

Plans for a first competition to coincide with the Paris Exhibition of 1900 were outlayed, although in the end, the first games were held in Athens in 1896 at the eager insistence of Greece.



OLYMPIAD IV
LONDON 1908

These games were more successful, partly due to the influence of an 'Intermediate Games' held in Athens in 1906. These games were originally intended for Rome, but an eruption by Vesuvius prevented that. 100,000 watched events in the White City stadium.



400 METRES

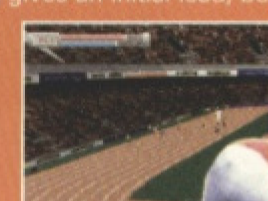
FIRST FEATURED:1896
CURRENT HOLDER:QUINCY WATTS (USA)

The longest of the sprint events, the 400m requires more than just unbridled speed. Stamina and courage are also required to complete the single lap with enough power left for the final strait.

The 400m is more dramatic and prone to upsets than the 100m. All eight lanes can be utilised by human players.



The game reflects the balancing act by adding a secondary stamina bar for each player. Rapid button pressing gives an initial lead, but players will be left exhausted should the stamina bar fall to nothing. A wheeling camera angle follows all eight players around the stadium.



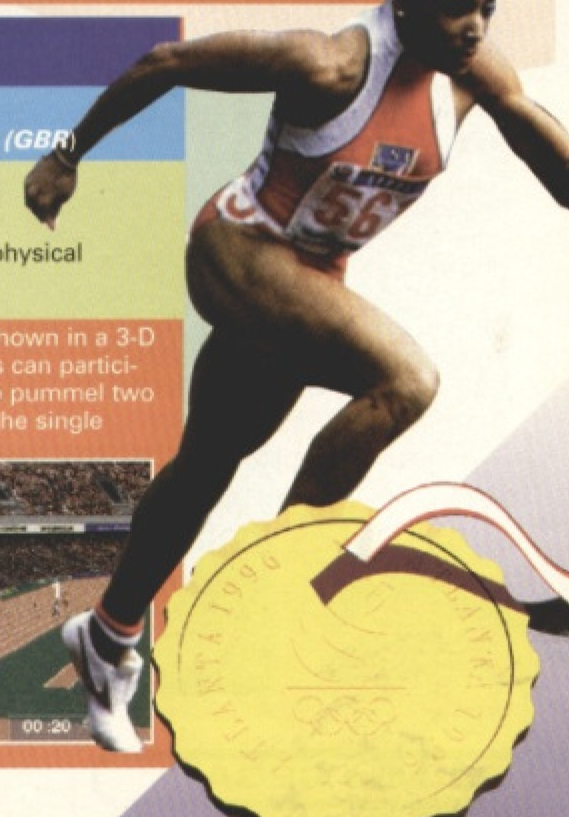


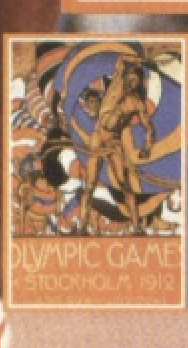
100 METRES

FIRST FEATURED:1896
CURRENT HOLDER:LINFORD CHRISTIE (GBR)

The 100m is one of the showcase events of any Olympics – 'The fastest men on Earth'. The sprint requires a short burst of intense physical efforts to reach speeds of around 30mph.

The games are introduced with this event, shown in a 3-D stadium. There are eight lanes, so all players can participate simultaneously. Players are expected to pummel two joypad buttons furiously to attain speed on the single strait course.

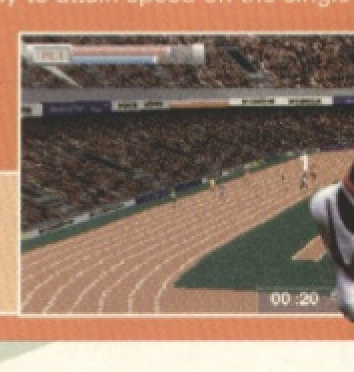




OLYMPIAD V
STOCKHOLM 1912

The Swedes introduced some remarkable innovations: both the photo-finish and electronic timer were used for track events. Japan entered for the first time. A new event was modern pentathlon, devised by de Coubertin himself.

Here the back straight is seen from the final turn.





OLYMPIAD VII

ANTWERP 1920

The Great War cancelled the 1916 Olympic. The nations seen as the aggressors in the war were not invited to Belgium. These were the first to feature the Olympic flag, designed by De Coubertin.





TRIPLE JUMP

FIRST FEATURED:1896
CURRENT HOLDER:MICHAEL CONLEY (USA)

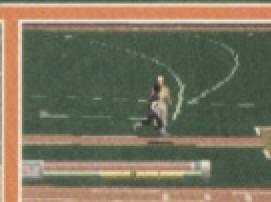
The first ever olympic trophy was awarded in this discipline. Triple jumpers are rarely sprinters or long jumpers, as the peculiar technique of the event requires specialised training.

The event is similar to the other jumps initially, but when the line is reached, a series of three button presses is needed to propel the player through the three jumping phases. Optimum angles for each stage are shown as separate indicators.





The triple jump runs parallel to the main track.



Triple Jump is one event we stand a good chance of a gold medal in at Atlanta.



OLYMPIAD VIII

PARIS 1924

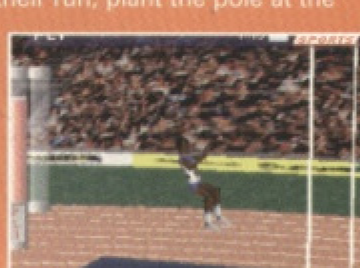
These were the first games to feature an 'Olympic Village' for the competitors, and employed the new technology of radio to broadcast events for the first time. The movie Chariots of Fire is set at these games.

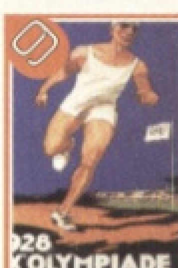
POLE VAULT

FIRST FEATURED:1896
CURRENT HOLDER:MAXIM TARASSOV (EUN)

East Europeans and Russians in particular are strong in this event. It requires immense strength and no little courage, as well as immaculate timing. Players attempt to pass over a narrow bar some five metres above the ground.

This is a complex, though short event. Players must commence their run, plant the pole at the correct time with a button press, and release the pole before a second 'clearance' gauge falls belong a certain level. Players get three attempts at each height level.





OLYMPIAD IX

AMSTERDAM 1928

Amsterdam also saw the introduction of the Olympic flame which burned throughout the competition. Women competed in Track and Field events for the first time, reflecting new attitudes in society.



This tricky event takes you right in to the moment when you shave the top of the bar.









HIGH JUMP

FIRST FEATURED:1896
CURRENT HOLDER:JAVIER SOTOMAYOR (CUB)

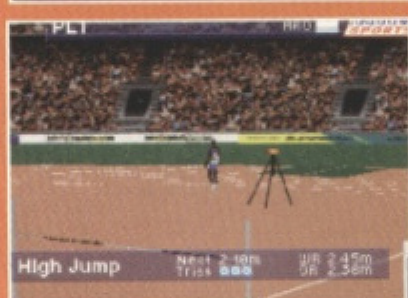
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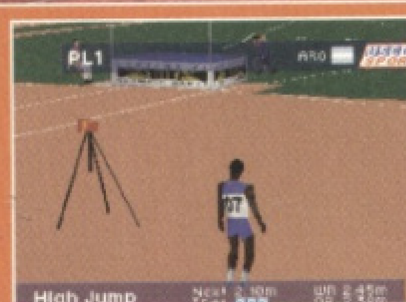
The technique for play is quite simple, with rapid button pressing to gain speed, and another button used to launch the player at the line. Holding this down increases the angle of takeoff, which determines distance. The event takes place on a strip inside the running track.





The portrayal of the event is remarkably close to televised coverage of high jump.





Before each attempt, an information bar is presented beneath your competitor.



OLYMPIAD XI

BERLIN 1936

The infamous Nazi games, intended by Adolf Hitler as a propadanda stunt, but a black American, Jesse Owens, became the star of the games with four gold medals in track and field. For the first time, the Olympic flame was lit in Athens and run to the host nation.

DISCUS

FIRST FEATURED:1896
CURRENT HOLDER:ROMAS UBARTAS (LIT)

One of the ancient events, this involves throwing a small weighted disc the furthest distance possible. The classical method of throwing involves rotating the body to gain momentum.

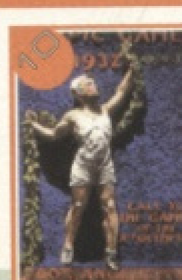
The game event poses two challenges – button pressing to gain the required momentum, and excellent timing to throw the discus to the fore. Otherwise, it falls out of the measuring zone. Players are given three throws in each round.











OLYMPIAD X

LOS ANGELES 1932

The World Depression meant there was a dip in the number of countries attending, but the USA put on a glitzy show with huge opening ceremonies. Some bizarre things occured: in the 3000m, a counting error meant the runners ended up doing an extra lap!



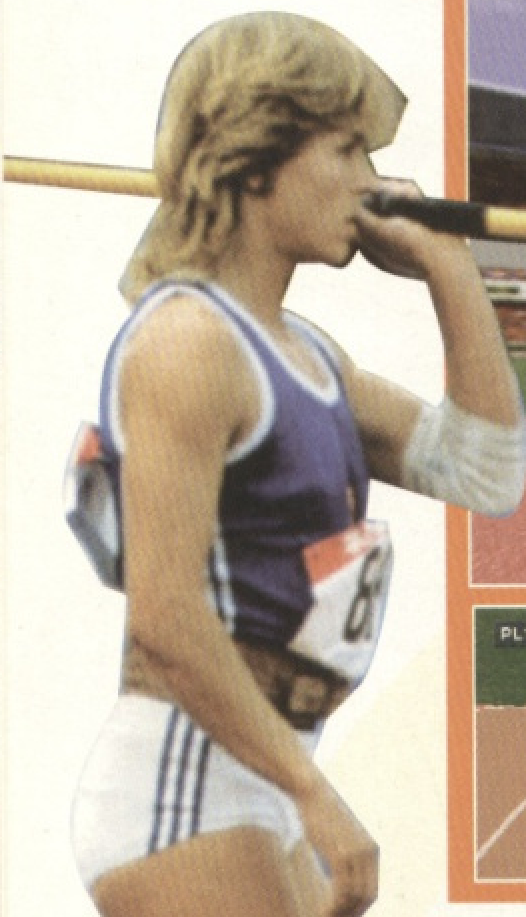


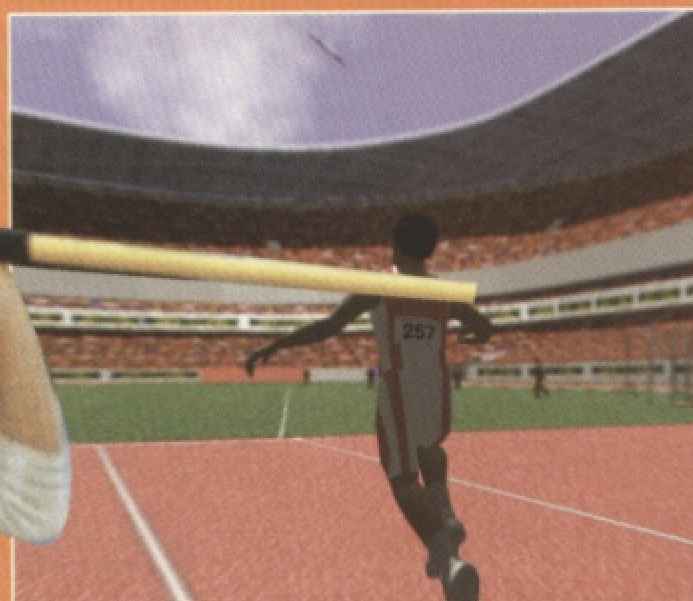
OLYMPIAD XIV

LONDON 1948

London played host to the an 'austerity' post-war games, the games being held at Wembley. Unsurpisingly, Japan and Germany did not take part, nor did the Soviet Union. It was the last time a related Olympic Art event accompanied the games.







JAVELIN

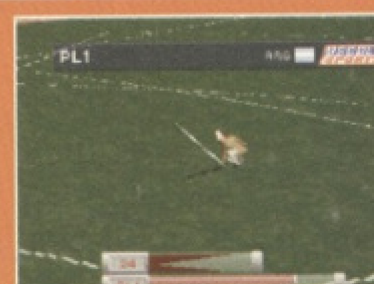
FIRST FEATURED:1908
CURRENT HOLDER:JAN ZELEZNY (TCH)

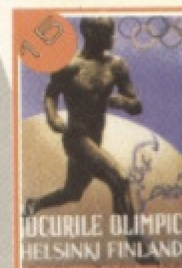
Another ancient sport, based on a Greek spear weapon, but not incorporated into the modern games until 1908. Javelin throwers have the most powerful biceps in sport.

The event is portrayed similarly to the jumping events, with a short run up. With the javelin, closeness to the line is required, with the optimum moment of release shown on a separate bar indicator. The button is held to gain the best angle of flight. Players have three attempts, their best distance being recorded.









OLYMPIAD XV

HELSINKI 1952

Russia participated for the first time since 1912, now as the Communist USSR, but the athletes refused to be housed with those from 'Capitalist' countries. The two separate German states could not agree on sending a unified team.

HAMMER

FIRST FEATURED:1900
CURRENT HOLDER:ANDREY ABDUVALYEV (EUN)

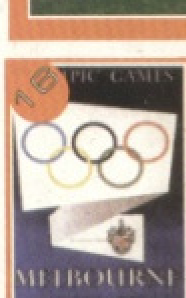
The hammer is similar to the Discus in its use of circular motion to build momentum in a small circular space.

In the event, players build speed swinging the hammer, and have to release it within a narrow band to stay within the measuring area. The inertia should make it harder to time than the Discus.







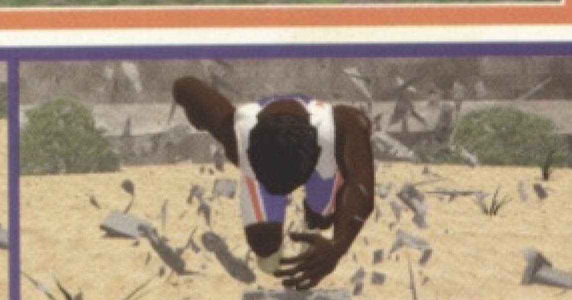


OLYMPIAD XVI

MELBOURNE 1956

This was the first time the games were held in the Southern hemisphere. The problems of the scorching climate affected the performance of many athletes. Due to Australia's strict quarantine law for horses, the Equestrian events were held in Stockholm.







OLYMPIAD XVIII

TOKYO 1964

Japan had originally been scheduled to hold the 1940 Olympics, cancelled by war. In 1964, they spent millions providing dazzling facilities in Tokyo. New sports introduced were Volleyball and Judo where the host nation performed well.



100M FREESTYLE

FIRST FEATURED:1900
CURRENT HOLDER:ALEXANDER POPOV (EUN)

The range of swimming events in the Olympics is vast, but none is as followed as the 100m freestyle — the sprint of the pool events. Out and out speed, plus breathing rhthym are the key..

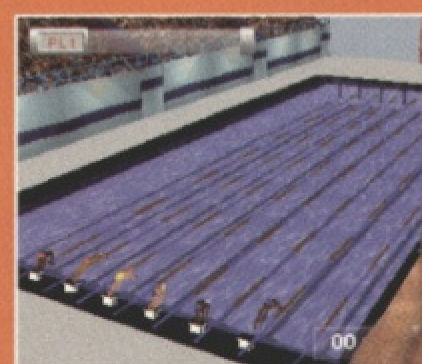
Swimming in the game is simple, with rabid button pressing again called on. The complication is breathing which is controlled by a third button and must be incorporated into the movement. A separate swimming arena is rendered for this one event, with a spectacular eight lane spread for all player participation.

own on a separate bar indicator. The button is held to gain the best angle of flight. Players have three attempts, their best distance being recorded.

100 Atlanta1996











OLYMPIAD XVII

ROME 1960

The ancient architecture of the Italian capital was used as a dramatic backdrop to the games. The athletes of 82 nations (Soviets excluded) received the blessing of the Pope. The games were also televised in every European nation.



FENCING

FIRST FEATURED:1896
CURRENT HOLDER:ERIC SRECKI (FRA)

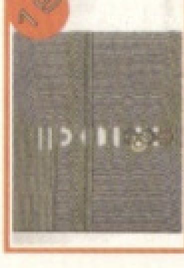
Sword games suited the aristocratic nature of the early Olympics, but the event has survived for 100 years, and has eight disciplines. Electronic measurement has replaced the traditional drawing of blood to register a hit.

The game comes closest to a fighting event, with two players facing off on a narrow piste. The Épeé event has been picked, and a winner must score five hits against his opponents, using thrust, parry and lunge moves.









OLYMPIAD XIX

MEXICO CITY 1968

The relatively poor nation of Mexico strove to provide an excellent games, but the extravagance of facilities led to riots by citizens. Athletes too, had to adjust to Mexico City's high altitude.

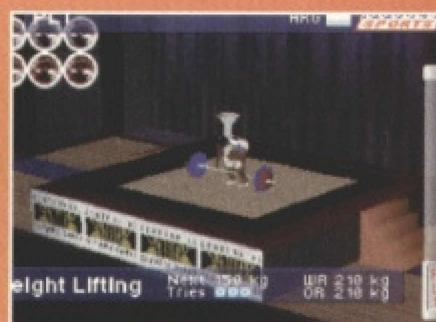
WEIGHTLIFTING (SUPER HEAVYWEIGHT)

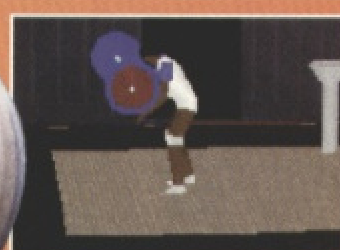
FIRST FEATURED:1920
CURRENT HOLDER:ALEXANDER KURLOVICH (EUN)

Modern lifting replaced the quaint categories of pre First World War Olympics at Antwerp. The event requires huge muscle mass and immense will to raise the weight.

The game cheekily demands a similar level of endurance. Long periods of button pummeling are required to raise the weight first to chin level, and then for the jerk above the head. Then, left and right movements are needed to stabilise the top-heavy player until the three lights are lit for an accepted lift.

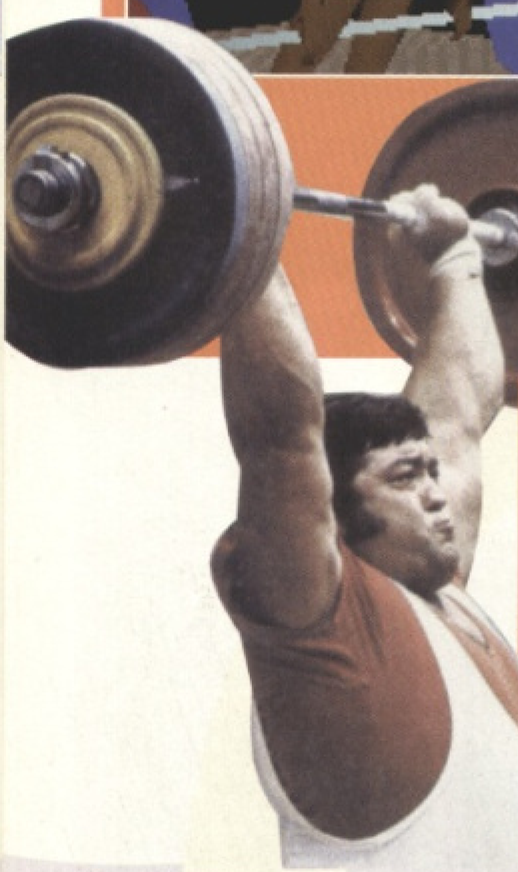








Even though you have the bar at your neck, you're only half done. By now, your fingers will be begging for mercy. As they should be.



20

OLYMPIAD XX

MUNICH 1972



The venue constructed for the Munich games, with its tower and steel and glass 'tented pavilions', was stunning, but these games were marred when Palestinian terrorists stormed the Olympic Village and abducted Jewish athletes, eleven of which died.

21

OLYMPIAD XXI

MONTREAL 1976



The Montreal Olympics ran into a level of debt that is still being repaid by the city. There was a mass boycott of African nations, protesting at the apartheid regime of South Africa.





SKEET SHOOTING

FIRST FEATURED:1968
CURRENT HOLDER:SHAN ZHANG (CHN)

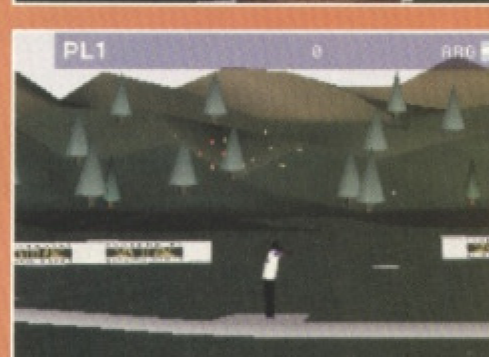
A relatively recent shooting event. Skeet is a form of clay pigeon shooting, using a double-barrelled shotgun. Players attempt to shoot flying targets from a variety of positions for points.

Five shooting positions are arranged in a semi-circle, with a sixth placed in the centre. The player has control over a target and each button controls a single barrel. Skeets are 'pulled' in batches of two.



The strange cylinder in the foreground is one of your rifle cartridges, which pop out of the screen when you fire.

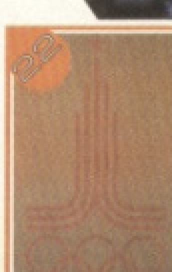




22

OLYMPIAD XXII

MOSCOW 1980



The Moscow Olympics suffered from a boycott of major Western nations, including the USA and Japan, intimating a protest against the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979. Moscow saw major British success in Track and Field with four gold medals.

ARCHERY

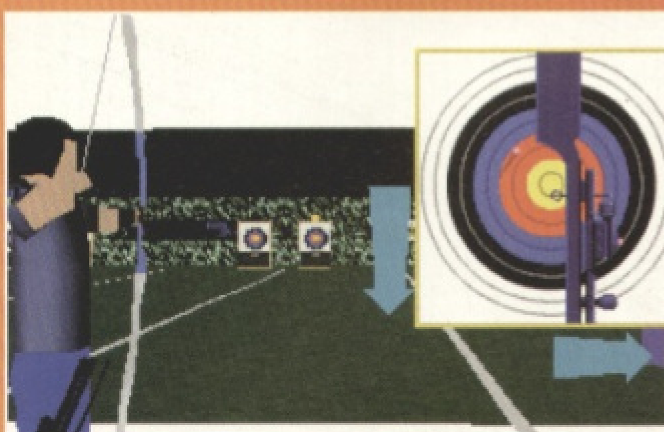
FIRST FEATURED:1972
CURRENT HOLDER:SEBASTIEN FLUTE (FRA)

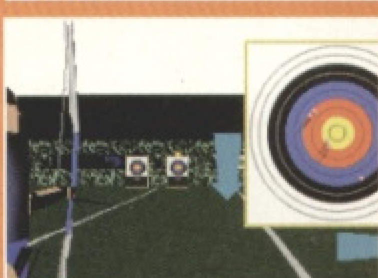
Munich saw the return of modern archery. Players have a fixed number of arrows to release in a limited time span. Scores are calculated from the closeness to the centre of the circular target.

These pictures came days before the issue went to print. They show how competition Archery is being conveyed as a target event, with aiming and tension paramount.

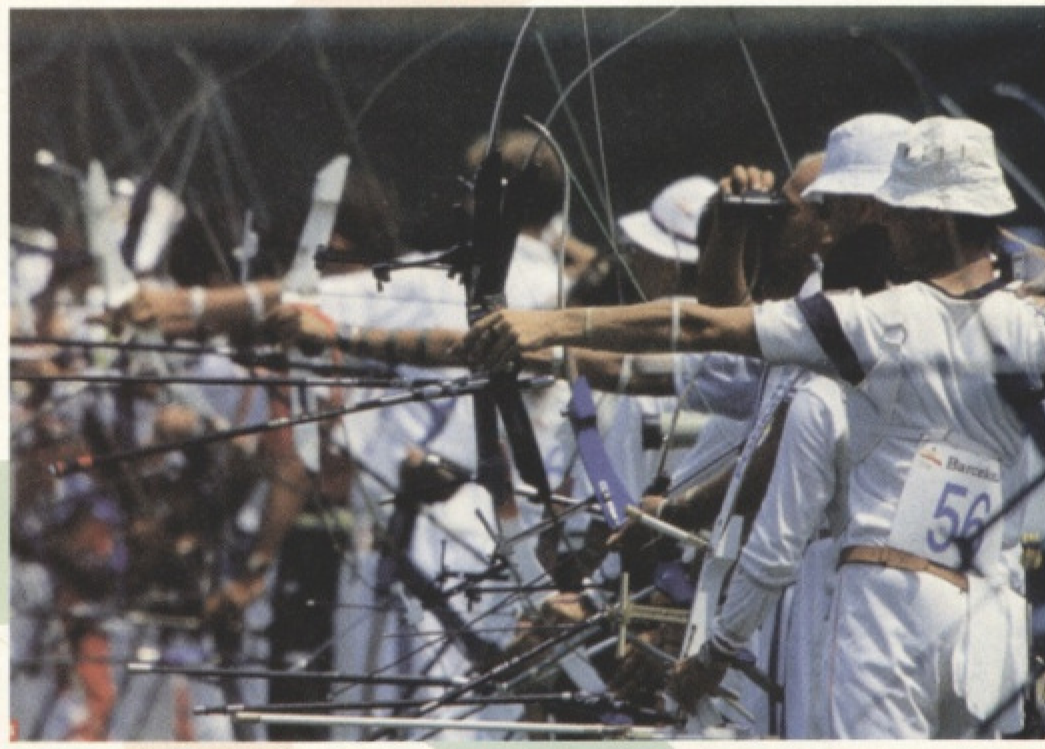


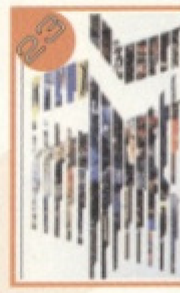
Before he unloads his quiver, our archer takes time to prepare.





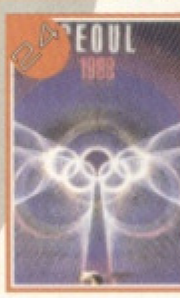
The archer's bow is removed after the arrow is fired to reveal the score. There is also a time limit to contend with.





OLYMPIAD XXIII
LOS ANGELES 1984

Los Angeles was the first privately sponsored tournament, to the tune of over $500m. Russia retaliated for the Moscow boycott by refusing to attend. The Games hero was Carl Lewis, who repeated Jesse Owens' four medal tally of the Berlin Games.



OLYMPIAD XXIV
SEOUL 1988

A multitude of nations (159) attended a mostly non-political games. The Soviet Union and East Germany returned to dominate. Superstar sprinter Ben Johnson was disqualified for failing a drugs test two days after winning the 100m.

Barcelona'92

OLYMPIAD XXV
BARCELONA 1992

Now, a billion TV viewers globally spectated on the spectacular opening ceremonies. In place of the fallen Soviet union, a Unified Team of the republics competed. Linford Christie once again brought the 100m sprint title back to Britain.

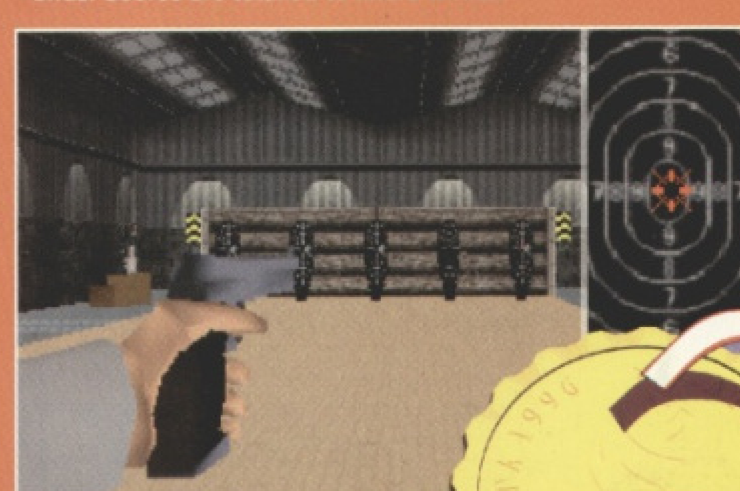
RAPID FIRE PISTOL

FIRST FEATURED:1896
CURRENT HOLDER:RALPH SCHUMANN (GER)

This event has been around since the beginning. The Germans are current Olympic champions, so their aim must have improved in the last 50 years. The rapid-fire event requires quick reflexes.

This fun event places five targets in front of the player. He has to discharge a bullet at each, scored from one to ten according to accuracy, within time intervals of eight, four and two seconds. Scores are totalled to find a winner.





PROJECT
OLYMPIC SOCCER

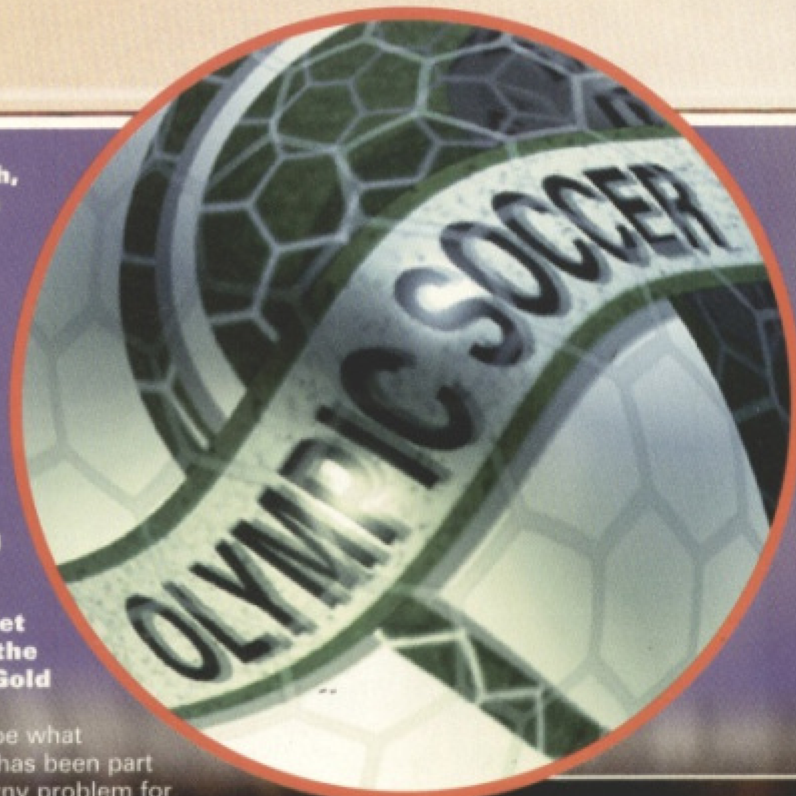
PUBLISHER
US GOLD

INITIATED
JULY '95

RELEASE
JUNE '96

FORMAT
SATURN

DEVELOPERS
SILICON DREAMS



After last year's Fever Pitch, US Gold could be forgiven for never going near a footy game again. The title was reasonably successful, but the PR headaches of ten tempremental 'character' actors, press controversy, taking over nightclubs and football grounds...
Silicon Dreams have gone straight back to football with their official tie-in with the Olympics. The company has a fixation with big sporting events, with licensed games for Barcelona '92, Lillehammer '94 and World Cup '94. And let us never forget World Cup Carnival, a C64 game for the 1986 championship in Mexico that 'Gold would rather not be reminded of.

Think of the 'Games, and soccer might not be what immediately springs to mind, but the event has been part of all but two of the past Olympics. The thorny problem for many years was the requirement that all Olympians be amateurs, which prevented the cream of professional football taking part. These restrictions have eased over the last decade, and now most footballers are admitted, although those who competed in the previous World Cup are generally excluded.

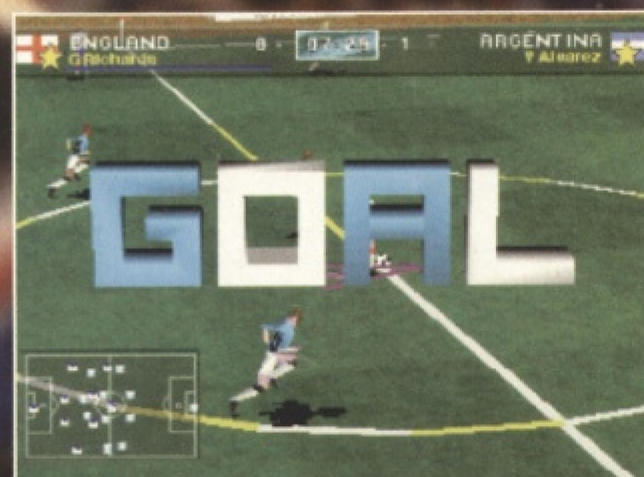
In recreating the event Olympic-style, Silicon Dreams have been bound by the wishes of ACOG, the all-powerful organising committee of Atlanta '96, so understandably 'Ten Bellies' Barger was not asked back for a repeat performance. The benefit is complete authenticity as far as the tournament arrangements go.



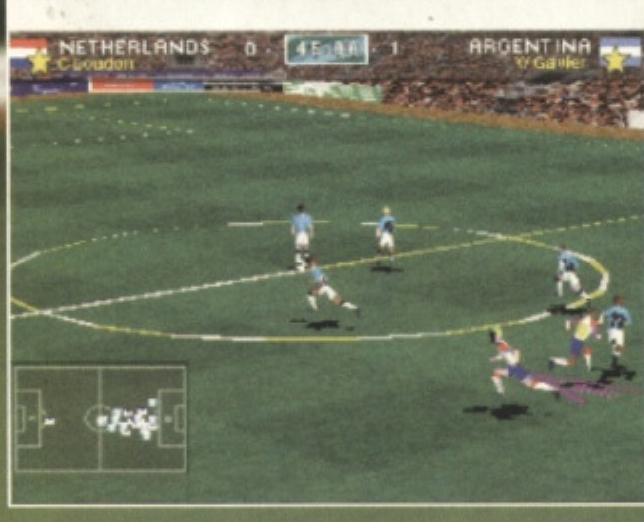
SHARP AND SIMPLE

You'll immediately notice the pared-down visual approach Silicon Dreams have taken with the game. Olympic Soccer is rendered realtime in 3-D polygons, rather than create the illusion of solid characters with sprites. Silicon Dreams claim it is the first soccer game to do this. The benefit is the freedom to view from any angle and at great speed. The finished game graphics will be more detailed than these shots, with full texturing on players.





Not noted for its subtlety, Olympic Soccer announce that someone has just scored.







AUTHENTIC OLYMPIC GAMES 100 Atlanta 1996 COLLECTION





SENSIBLE DESIGN

Olympic Soccer is designed for control freaks. Silicon Dreams project producer Rob Palfreman explains: "we thought most other soccer games didn't give the player enough freedom. With Olympic Soccer we wanted the player to be able to do anything at any time". To that end, the players move and kick exactly as the player controls, there is no delay, and no automatic orientation of the players towards goal. In a spiritual sense, Olympic Soccer is a 'Sensible Soccer'; for the Saturn, with fast uncomplicated gameplay.



Bloody great arrows under your player's feet never allow you to forget the direction the goal is in.







PREVIOUS OLYMPIC WINNERS

*** No contests in 1896, Athens or 1932, Los Angeles.**

1900	GREAT BRITAIN
1904	GREAT BRITAIN
1908	GREAT BRITAIN
1912	GREAT BRITAIN
1920	BELGIUM
1924	URUGUAY
1928	URUGUAY
1936	ITALY
1948	SWEDEN
1952	HUNGARY
1956	USSR
1960	YUGOSLAVIA
1964	HUNGARY
1968	HUNGARY
1972	POLAND
1976	EAST GERMANY
1980	CZECHOSLOVAKIA
1984	FRANCE
1988	USSR
1992	SPAIN



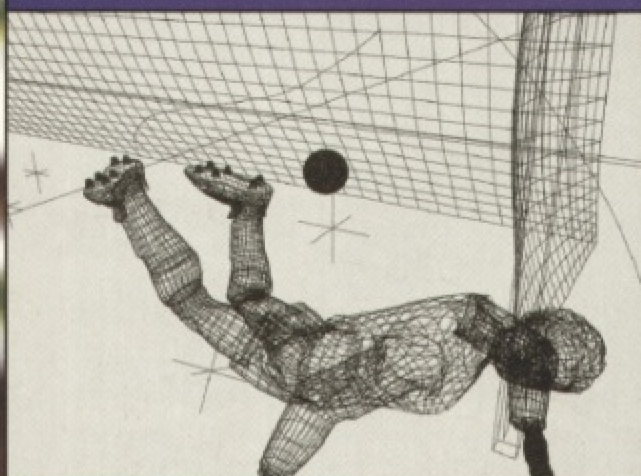


THE THOUGHT THAT COUNTS

When programming the Artificial Intelligence for the computer players in Olympic Soccer, Silicon Dreams were able to use some of the work done for Fever Pitch, which featured players with specific characteristics. Although Olympic Soccer features no 'Prima-Maradonas', each team has a specific AI profile.

KEY TO MOVEMENT

Most 32-bit developers are moving towards Motion Capture animation: detailed in previous issues, and featuring in everything from Loaded to Fifa '96. Indeed, Olympic Soccer's graphic artists have employed a lot of Motion Capture, but also mixed it with traditional 'key framed' animation, which is rendered purely on computer. This return to 'traditional' computer animation is more effective for specific manoeuvres where Motion Capture is too inflexible.

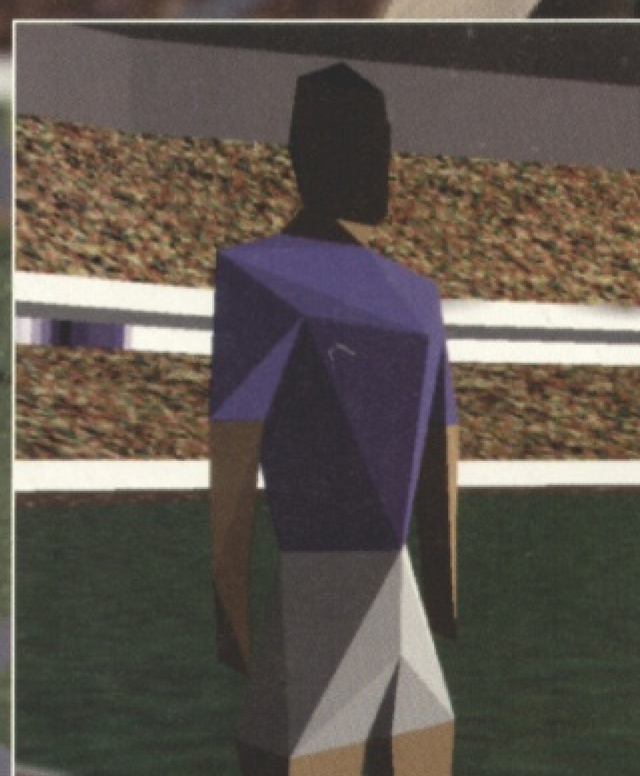












For the first time, the soccer players in a football game are made entirely from polygons. You can get as close as you like without the aliasing caused by geometrically mapped sprites. Bit tight on the shorts, though.



An animation sequence showing the detail in a single player movement.





The radar is positionable as you like. Options, thankfully, is this game's middle name



Each of the eighteen camera angles is designed to follow the action dynamically.







ANGLING TIMES

There are no less than eighteen selectable camera angles to view the pitch from. These are arranged into six distance perspectives, from seeing the bulge within a player's shorts to the view from a blimp overhead, each with three distinct angles. From all these positions the game remains playable, unlike other football games where a plethora of playing perspectives are unusable and merely cosmetic.







MINUTE WALTZ

Olympic Soccer will feature a replay option, with all the requisite view-changing options. The real innovation is the ability to store an full minute's action in RAM! This is many times the length of other games' stored replay.



Unsurprisingly, the FMV sequences for both 'Soccer and 'Games have taken over six months to assemble. Graphic Artist Andy Bebop has even found time to render an Olympic image exclusively for MEAN MACHINES

MOVE TO MOVE

The aim of Olympic Soccer is to combine the short term playability with more complex moves: long and short passes, chips, backheels, one-twoes, diving headers etc. Where Olympic aims to be different is allowing proper sequencing of two or more of these techniques, so that over a longer term of play, players can become genuinely proficient.







The groupings and tournaments will be truly Olympian in structure. US Gold are holding off for the correct draw of nations.



A TV-style rundown precedes each kick-off, with a convincing pre-match commentary giving you time to crack open a shandy.

SPEAK FREELY

Football commentators are making a mint at the moment, with everyone who has ever been broadcast being approached by software houses. Silicon Dreams targetted Alan Green of BBC Radio Five Live, as radio commentators are generally more expressive than their TV counterparts. The range of commentary is massive, and when we were demoed the game, we could swear that Jimmy Hill was in there as well, having conversations with Greeny.

PROJECT: NIGHTS

PUBLISHER: SEGA

INITIATED: NOVEMBER '95

RELEASE: AUTUMN '96

FORMAT: SATURN

DEVELOPERS: SEGA (SONIC TEAM)

The most outstanding games of recent times have been simulations of one kind or another – simulations of fighting (Virtua Fighter, Mortal Kombat etc), simulations of driving (Sega Rally, Formula 1 etc) and simulations of football (FIFA '96, Euro '96 etc) have all struggled to refine and improve computer recreations of an easily identifiable reality. Sega are about to buck the trend with a surreal game so important and so groundbreaking that it has been earmarked as the Saturn's very first simultaneous worldwide release. That game is Nights.

So what will make Nights different? The complete abandonment of any element of simulation is the first factor. Others are more obvious, and more exciting. The setting of a dreamscape parallel reality allows seemingly free movement across land and sky. Foregrounds and backgrounds can be explored in equal measure, as the laws of gravity are forgotten in spectacular aerobatic displays. Interact with giant flying bosses, swing around, and through, incredible ladders supporting airborne rollercoasters of stars. Gameplay of an entirely new breed and graphics of a previously unseen design will conspire to give Mario 64 a run for its money. This is Nights. This is, very literally, the game of your dreams.



NIGHTS

SONIC TEAM







ELLIOT



This blue-haired boy arrives in Nightopia after humiliation on the basketball court. A group of high school kids steal Elliot's ball, belittling him in front of his team-mates. That night, Elliot has a nightmare about his embarrassment on the basketball court – an ordeal ended by Nights rescuing him and taking him to the tranquility of Nightopia.

Claris is a pink-haired girl who dreams of singing in a musical staged to celebrate the 100th anniversary of her town. She applies in writing to the musical's director, successfully passing the first audition although she is too terrified to sing. As the day of the final audition approaches, she has a nightmare about bright spotlights and mocking laughter. Nights comes to her rescue, and she arrives in Nightopia.

Something very special is about to change the face of 32 bit gaming. The project the 'Sonic Team' of programmers hope will have a similar impact as a certain blue hedgehog is Sega's first volley in the forthcoming war with Nintendo. Marcus dreams a little dream...













As Claris or Elliot you can walk over land, following clearly marked directions – only by becoming Nights can you fly.



CLARIS



DREAM ON



While essentially a game about children's fantasies, Nights has perhaps the most complex and detailed premise we've seen for quite some time. Two children, Elliot and Claris, visit parallel realities in their sleep. In their surreal and personalised worlds, 'Nightopias', the children's dreams are created when their floating 'Ideya' lights reflect their consciousness. Ideyas are balls of light that circle around visitors and are symbolically colour-coded – white Ideyas show purity, green Ideyas show development, blue Ideyas show intelligence, yellow Ideyas show hope and the especially rare red Ideyas show courage.

The sweet dreams in the respective Nightopias are threatened by the malevolent Wiseman, the ruler of Nightmare. Wiseman steals Ideyas from visitors in an attempt to replace their dreams with his nightmares. He is helped in his attacks by Nightmareans, evil creations sent to Nightopias to execute his plans. With their four principal Ideyas stolen by Nightmareans, Elliot and Claris face the invaders with only their red Ideyas of courage intact.

Meanwhile Nights, one of Nightmare's invading mutants, refuses to carry out Wiseman's plans and is imprisoned in the chasm between dreams. Elliot uses his courage Ideya to free Nights – who then helps the children defeat Nightmare. By jumping into Nights' body, the children can fly. Using Nights' powers and following his lead, the children begin retrieving their four stolen Ideyas. When they have all five, Nights will take them to Nightmare and the final battle with Wiseman...









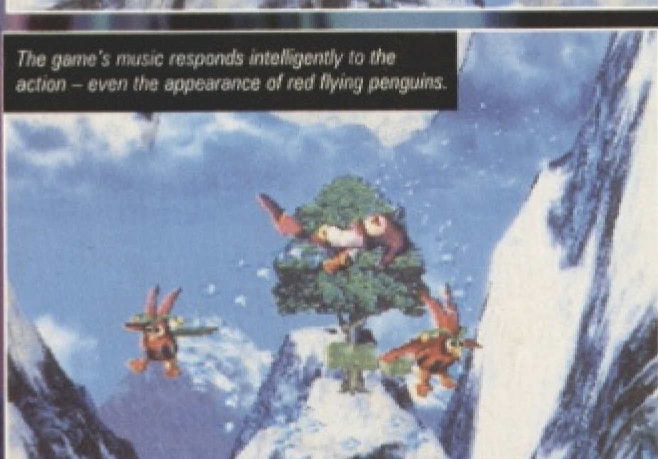


As Nights, take your collected Ideyas and deposit them in these floating canopies. When you have collected enough, you'll be able to make your way to the next level.

DREAM SEQUENCING

The obvious attention paid to Nights' appearance has been matched by the care taken over its soundtrack. Background music features different arrangements and phrases each time the game is played. The game's title music was recorded by a 32-piece orchestra.





The game's music responds intelligently to the action – even the appearance of red flying penguins.

NAKA'S PAD

Nights is the brainchild of the illustrious Sonic Team, and its leader Yuji Naka who produced Sega's greatest character to date. Nights is of such priority, that further secrets of the development will trickle through in the coming months. MEAN MACHINES, in its official capacity, will be there to report the facts. Sega are already showing plans to support Nights like no other Saturn title.







"NIGHTS IS LIKE NOTHING ANYONE HAS EVER SEEN BEFORE ON SEGA SATURN OR ANY OTHER NEXT GENERATION PLATFORM." – TOM KALINSKE, PRESIDENT, SEGA OF AMERICA.



A BRIEF HISTORY OF DREAMING

2000 BC

Egyptian papyrus documents discuss dreams and their possible meanings.

800 BC

Homer's Iliad describes dreams as messages from the gods. Morpheus, the god of dreams in Greek and Roman mythology, is generally depicted as a winged man, spreading poppy seeds to induce sleep.

150 BC

Greek philosopher Artemidorus reports thousands of subjects' dreams in his book Oneirocritica ('Critical dreams'). Unlike his predecessors Aristotle and Hippocrates, he concludes that it is impossible to infer generalised meanings from dreams.

1900

Sigmund Freud, the father of psychoanalysis, writes The Interpretation of Dreams. He proposes that dreams are symbolic expressions of frustrated desires. Although still highly regarded by some, Freud's theories and beliefs about the meaning of different types of dream had little grounding in scientific research methods.

1932

Swiss psychiatrist Carl Jung devises analytical psychology, prompted by study of his periodic dreams which appear to hold mythological and religious significance. His autobiography, published in 1961, is entitled Memories, Dreams, Reflections.

1953

Rapid Eye Movement (REM) is first described as the period during sleep when brain activity is at its highest and dream activity takes place. It is estimated that nearly 2 hours of REM dreaming occurs each night – 6 years of dreaming across the average lifetime.

1981

The term 'lucid dreaming' is coined when it is proved that external events can influence the content of dreams. Sleeping subjects lightly splashed with water report dreams about rain.

More recent research has revealed that all mammals – with the exceptions of the echidna, the spiny anteater and possibly the duckbilled platypus – dream every night. Despite extensive research, the possible meaning of dreams remains a mystery.

PREVIEWS



BY EA

GAME TYPE SHOOT 'EM UP

PRICE TBA

RELEASE JUNE

1 PLAYERS

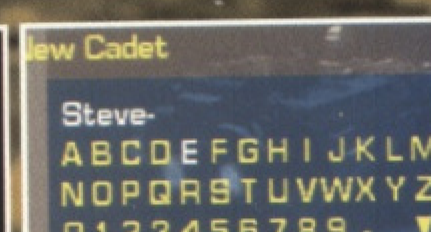
COMPLETE

SHOCKW ASSA

The year is 2019. Take That's Greatest Hits CD is still number one in the album charts, and Atari still haven't released a decent game for the Jaguar. Tom Cox's Triops have mutated to giant size and are threatening to take over the world, and Wimbledon have just survived their annual battle with relegation from the British Super League. For the 27th consecutive season.

But amidst all this panic, there is a much greater cause for alarm. Orbiting the Earth is the UNS Omaha, the first ever aircraft carrier in space. On a routine investigation one morning, the crew stumble upon an alien teleporting gate. After further examination, they find that the enemy is gathering en masse on the other side of this gate. This is where you come in. You have to take control of a futuristic spacecraft and hop in the teleporter/time gate thing to kill all the aliens. All very complicated stuff (!). Seated in your F-177 space machine, you must traverse the various landscapes of the planets, and destroy all of the troublesome aliens in order to save the world. Needless to say, MEAN MACHINES will review this document of an epic struggle in a forthcoming issue.

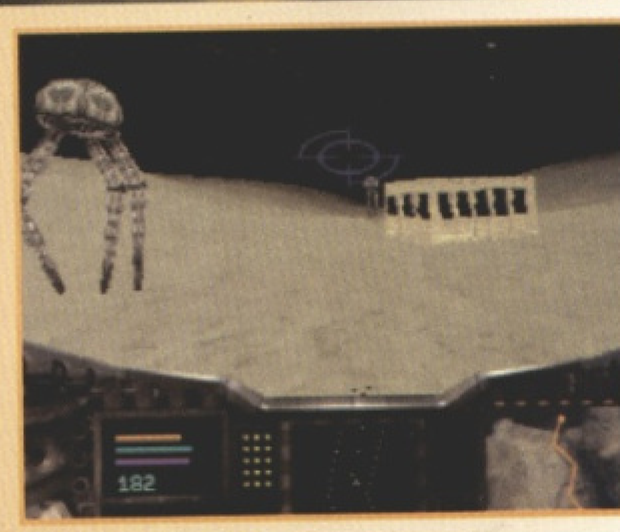






THE GENUINE ARTICLE

Apparently, this game is littered with the talents of the best people from the audio and visual world. Some of these people include a professional movie director, professional actors, a best selling novelist/script writer, top software engineers, award-winning audio composers, and top storyboard and computer graphic artists. Unfortunately, we don't have the actual names for these people (due to their impending murder trials), and most of them you'll have never heard of anyway. Never mind, at least you know you're in good hands etc.



WAVE
AULT



BREAKING THE BOUNDRIES

Although the game puts you in control of the F-177, you don't actually have complete freedom to move wherever you want. The radar facility at the bottom of the screen indicates not only the enemy and friendly craft, but also the limit for the area of play. If you venture outside the ring of dotted lines, the game will warn you, and your energy bar will slowly start to decrease. The ship will then begin juddering, and before you can mutter 'I think I should turn around,' you've melted away into a blob of your former self.





Here we see the creatures in action, moving through their natural habitat. The four-legged mushroom men are believed to be the horrible result of a bizarre gardening experiment.



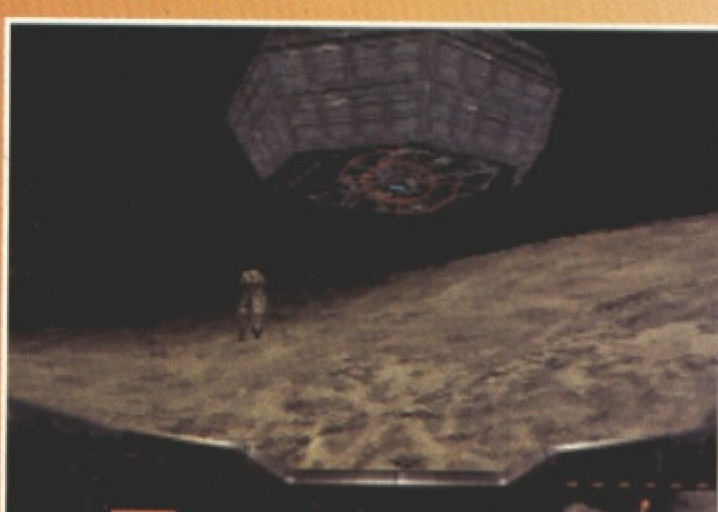
Floating balls are your main enemy on this level, so expect to see levitating hums on the next and hovering wil...Bip Bip, Brrrrrrrrr. Message end.



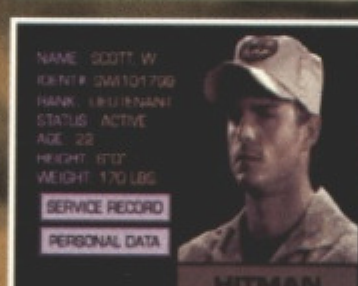
Check out the cool mottled effect on the rocks. It looks like the EMAP toilets after one of Dave Kelsall's legendary dumps. Enter at your own risk.

FILL HER UP PLEASE

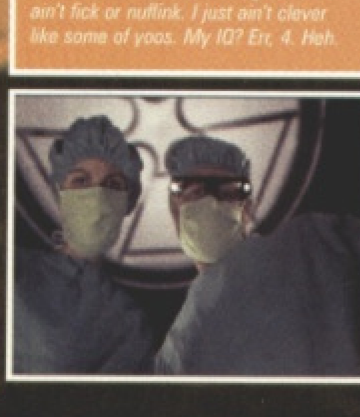
Within each of the main stages, there are numerous sub levels, that run continuously into one another. Once a particular set or number of aliens have been destroyed, then you'll be duly informed that you have completed the mission, and told to refuel before attempting the next mini-stage. Refuelling is much easier than using those poxy pumps that require credit cards to work (don't ask) as all you have to do is fly under the pod, and your supplies will be re-stocked.



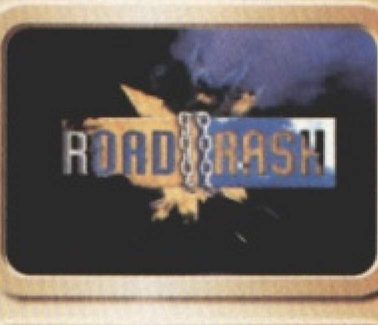
Fly under here for a quick stock up. Think of this as a kind of Safeway of the future. Everything you want from a store and a little bit mooorrrreee, and all that.



Yeah I'm Hitman. I'm 'ard right? And I ain't fick or nuffink. I just ain't clever like some of yoos. My IQ? Err, 4. Heh.







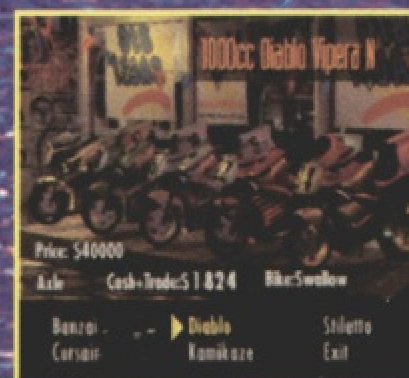
BY	ELECTRONIC ARTS
GAME TYPE	RACING
PRICE	TBA
RELEASE	JUNE
PLAYERS	1
COMPLETE	



Road Rash was one of the earliest next generation concepts. When the now sidelined 3DO machine was in its early stages of publicity, much was made of Electronic Arts' involvement, and their ability to bring big games to the machine.

And indeed, Road Rash was a success. And like several other 3DO properties, it has made its eventual transition into Saturn form. Electronic Arts are producing a straight conversion with no additional features. Road Rash has stayed remarkably true to its original formula of undulating courses, vicious opponents and a basic one-way ride from start to finish. What does it do for the Saturn?





Diablo, Banzai and for the lady of the road, the pointy Stiletto.

BOYS ON FILM

Like many American-conceived games, there's a fair amount of FMV inserted between the realtime generated action, but unlike most other sorry examples, this is generally quite amusing a catches the spirit of the game. Many of them are sadistic scenes showing your biker being run over, ridiculed or frisked by some uncompromising cop after a particularly duff performance. There is also the chance to bask in automotive glory, once a certain level of skill is shown.



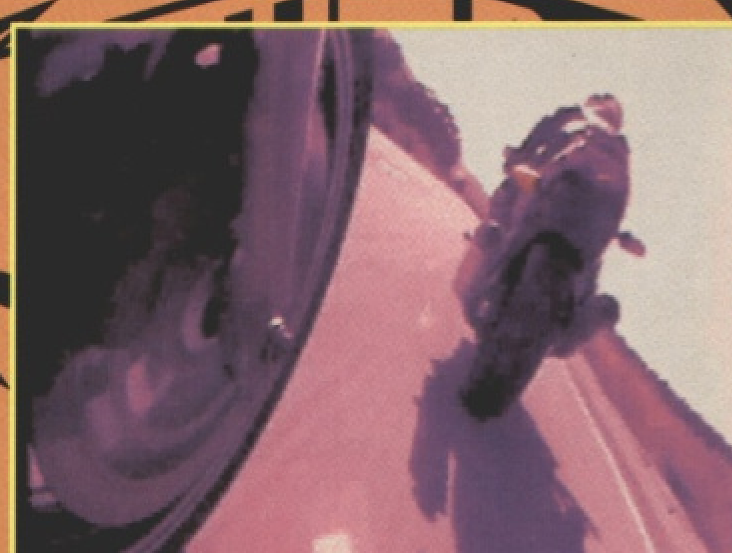
DIRT TRACK ANTICS

For the first time in Road Rash, there's the opportunity to take a different route! Look out for the turn-offs which lead to an ongoing off-road situation. The chance to cut a corner and bypass some troublesome opposition.





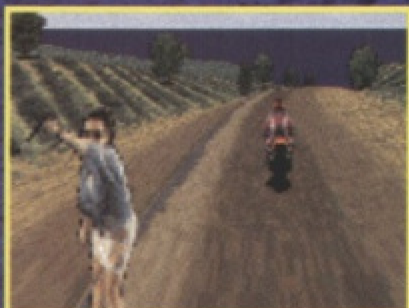




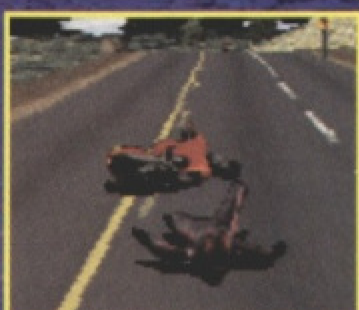


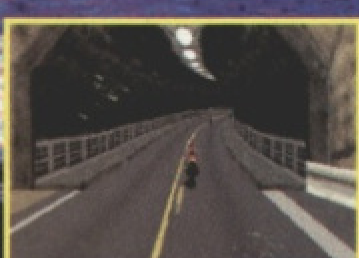






Take out a couple of 'squeegee merchants' on your way.









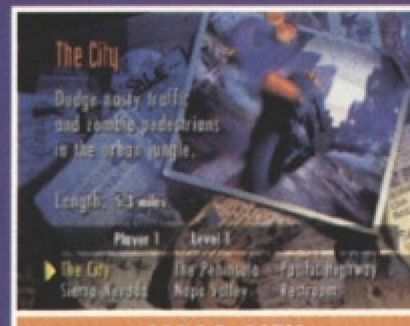
BODYWORK BEAUTIFUL

The Bikeshop has been rendered into Road Rash as an impressive feature of pre-game preparation. There are dozens of bikes to look through, from the lowly Rat Bikes, to the devastating Super Bikes. There's a video sequence swoop through each, plus a heap of stats.

How far is it to the next Kahuna burger?

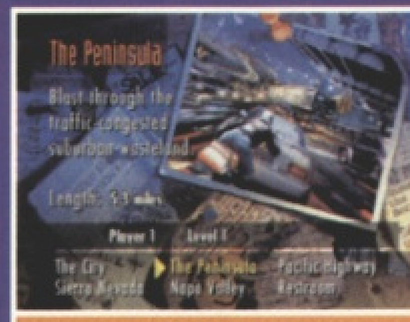
CRUISIN' USA

Road Rash's five race journeys are situated on the Sunshine coast of California, taking in the sights of San Francisco, the sun-kissed beaches and the lush hills inland. The scenery changes gradually throughout the race, with more variety than the previous 16-bit games. The courses are contoured and provide a more plausible biking landscape.



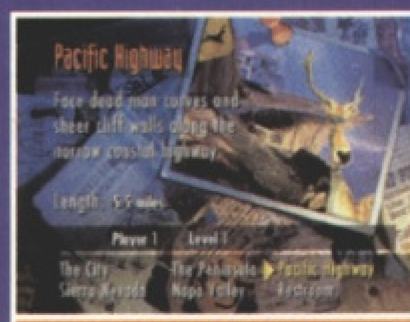
'CISCO CITY





PENINSULA





PACIFIC HIGHWAY





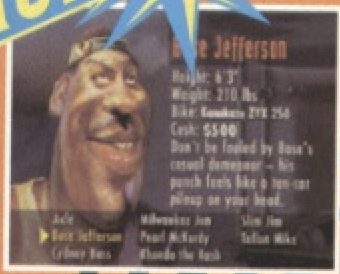
SIERRA NEVADA

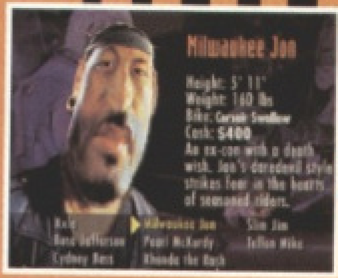




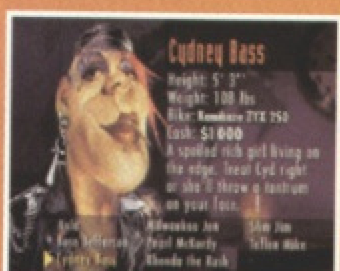
NAPA VALLEY





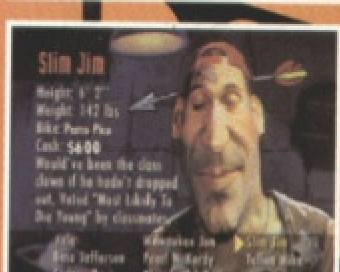


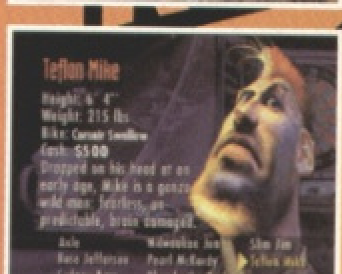












PANZER LEGIONS

The Road Rash circuit has its own close-knit band of grimy bikers, who hang out at Der Panzer club looking for races and wielding pool cues. You select from one of these ten characters, and talk with the rest, who are never short of a snide comment. The designers have modelled these on a variety of biker types, with exageratted cartoon head shots.



CHAIN GANG

The legendary bad behaviour of the fifteen Road Rash riders has not been stinted, and you can still take arms against a sea of mounted competitors. Now the game comes with an anti-violence disclaimer at the front end, but there's still lead pipes and chains to find.

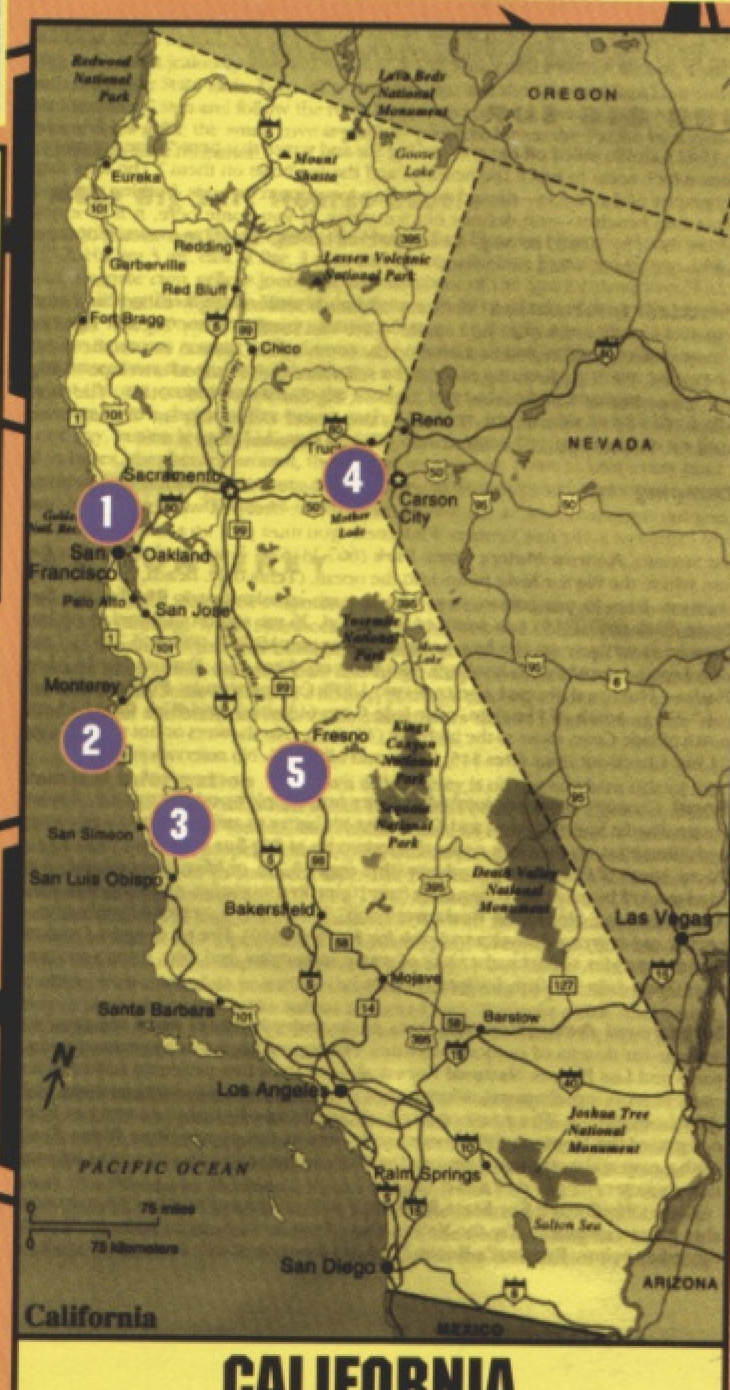




UNFINISHED SYMPHONY

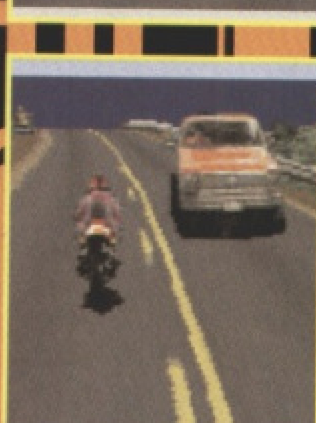
Those ugly and unavoidable numbers in the background are temporary, we assure you. They reflect the fact that the version of Road Rash shown here is still quite early. Instead of the monotone blue of this version, detailed skies and background scenery will appear in the final build.

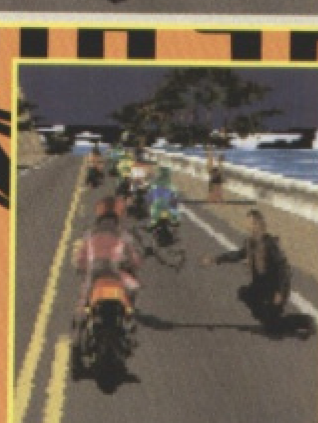
1. City.
2. Monterey Peninsula.
3. Pacific Highway.
4. Siera Nevada .
5. Napa Valley.



CALIFORNIA








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BY EMPIRE

GAME TYPE PINBALL

1-4 PLAYERS

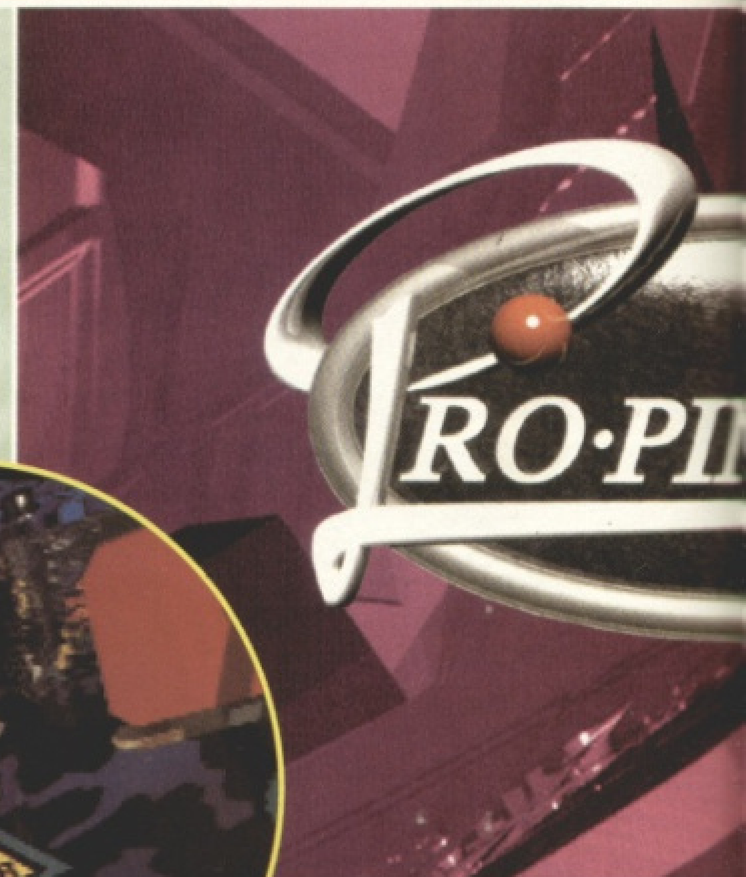
PRICE TBA

RELEASE JULY

COMPLETE

The search to create the ultimate pinball sim continues. Following a similar tradition to Ocean's True Pinball, Empire are about to launch the Saturn conversion of their PC title Pro Pinball – a pinball simulation, as opposed to a game based on pinball.

Empire have concentrated their efforts into producing one table, The Web, the first instalment in what they plan to be a series of tables under the Pro Pinball umbrella. The Web can be viewed from a number of angles and several different resolutions, a definite plus point being the absence of the scrolling effect that has marred many previous attempts at console pinball. Plug a rock 'n' roll soundtrack into the mix, and voice work by such luminaries as Monica Buford (we're reliably informed that she portrayed the voice of the lift in Blade Runner) and you've almost got the complete pub entertainment experience. All you need now is twenty people to blow cigarette smoke in your face and a complete stranger to spill a pint over you.





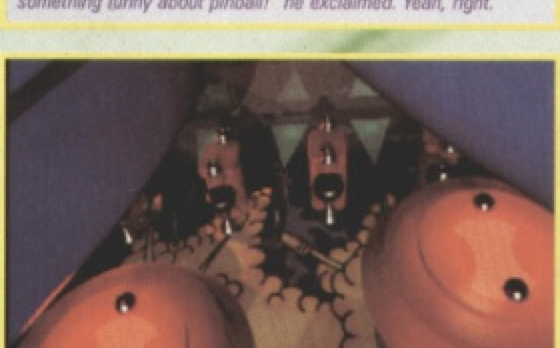








Marcus Creative Burnout: The Return. "It's hard to write something funny about pinball!" he exclaimed. Yeah, right.



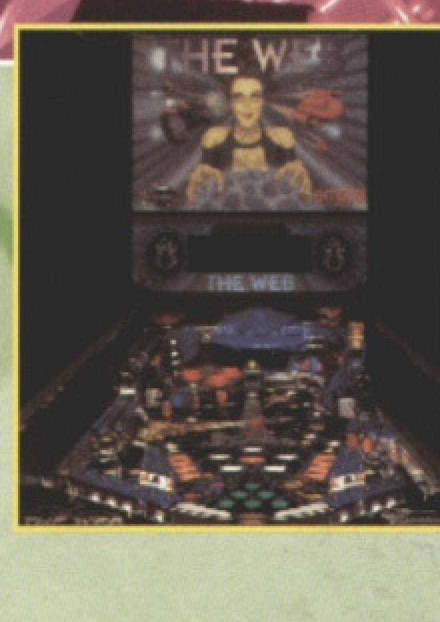
Steve Creative Burnout: "It's easy to write something cheap instead of being funny," he sneered. Yeah, obviously.

FLIPPER FUN

Empire have taken the simulation aspect of Pro Pinball seriously. Although the game only features one table, the level of detail is high – there are three flippers, two ramps, loops, orbits, targets, grab magnets, drop targets, lights, poppers, habitrails, jet bumpers, slingshots, an auto plunger, diverters, sink holes and the chance to play six balls simultaneously. One of the most impressive aspects of the table is, however, the dot matrix display above it. Developed separately by TV animation specialists Mind's Eye, it shows probably the most detailed sub-games we've ever seen on a pinball sim.



















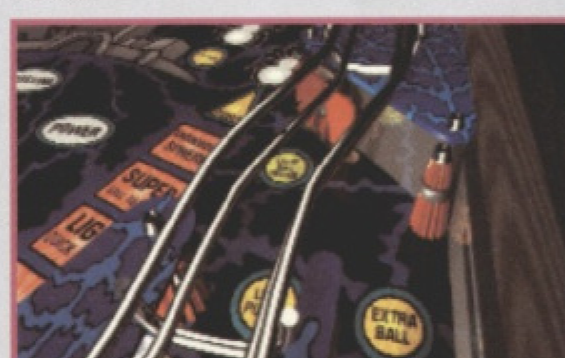






BALL GAMES

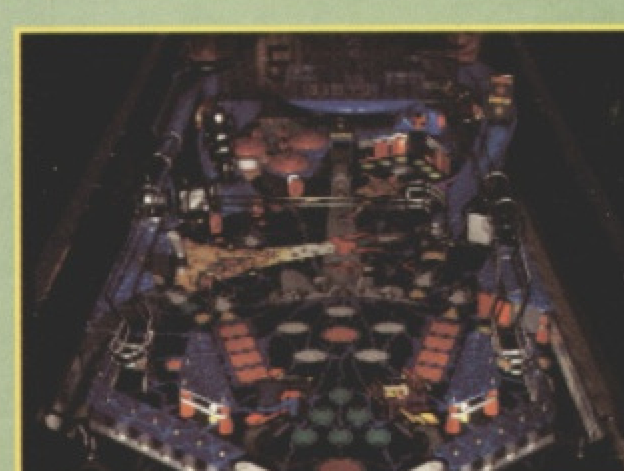
The Web table features some highly detailed Silicon Graphics rendering, most impressively of the base wood and metal guides. The game runs at 60 frames per second, improving the fluidity of the chrome ball on its journeys around the nooks and crannies of the table. The ball itself reflects its position on the table wherever it travels.

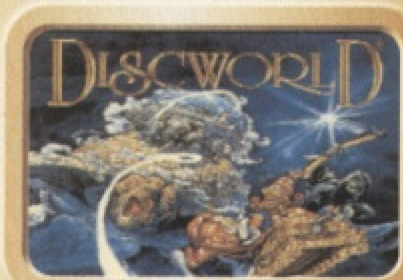




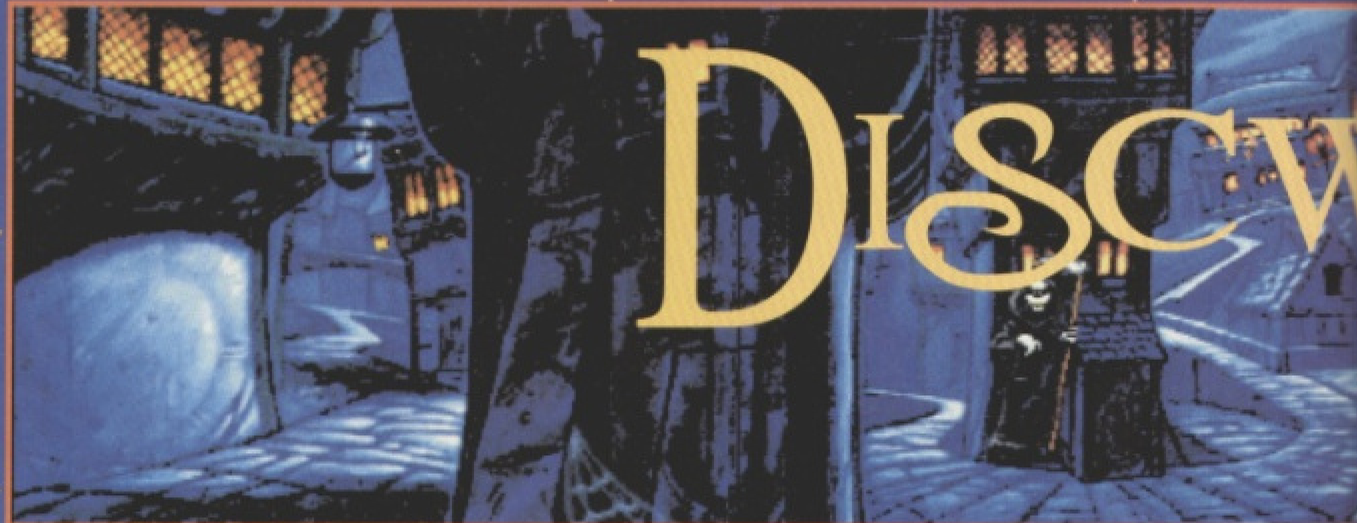
PINBALL WIZARDS

The Web features twenty music tracks specially recorded for the game by early Eighties New Wave supremos Bruce Foxton (former bassist with The Jam) and Jake Burns (Stiff Little Fingers' top man). A disenchanted SNES owner, Burns recently bought a PC, only to become disappointed with the poor quality of game music. Fellow SLF bandmember Foxton felt the same way, so the two offered their services to a number of software companies. Burns is well pleased with the result of their work for Empire: "Hopefully, as gamesplayers, what we've done is add to the excitement of the playing experience and freed one more game from the tyranny of the Spectrum style beep beep beep."

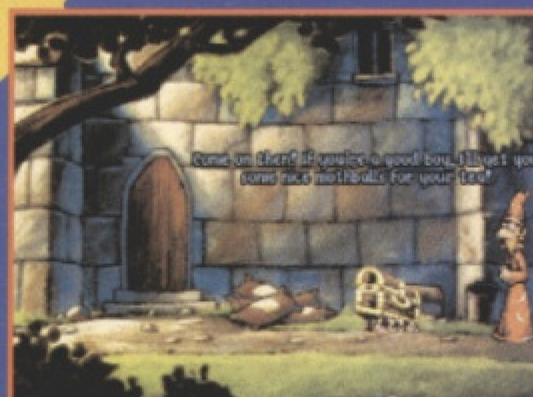




- **BY:** PSYGNOSIS
- **GAME TYPE:** RPG
- **PLAYERS:** 1
- **PRICE:** TBA
- **RELEASE:** JUNE
- **COMPLETE**



Terry Pratchett is currently one of the country's most successful, and most prolific, authors. And the hat-wearing humorist is able to crank out product at a rate of knots as well, which must keep his publishers happy.



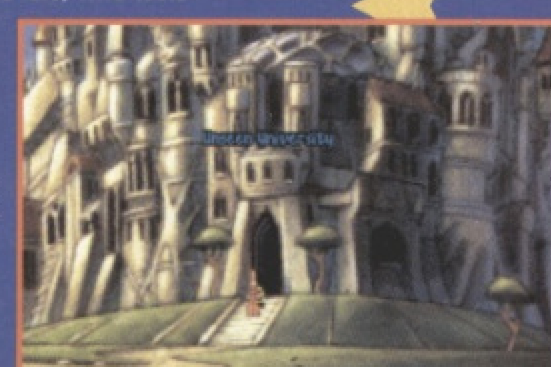


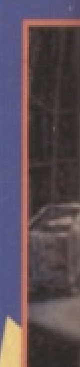
Enthusiasts of the man they say is better at being Douglas Adams than Douglas Adams rate the Discworld series of novels as the cream of a sizable crop. Discworld, as any university science-fiction society member could probably tell you, is a bizarre city sealed in a dome and supported on its travels by the shell of a rambling cosmic turtle.

This sees you assume the persona of a bumbling apprentice wizard called Rincewind (voiced by Monty Python star Eric Idle) who tests his mettle by seeking to rid the land of a dragon. Your journey begins at the university, your task soon complicated by all manner of characters, some of whom are voiced by such linguistically renowned celebs as Tony Robinson and Jon Pertwee. Once the dragon is located and sorted out, the game progresses as Rincewind discovers a secret sect, and travels backwards and forwards in time searching for their hidden lair.

This immense, four act game is heavily reliant on Terry Pratchett's punning style of humour for much of its charm. The uninitiated might find this cerebral game a bit inhospitable. If you're a Discworld buff, however, chances are you'll love it.

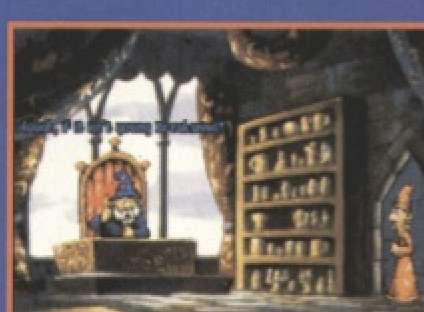


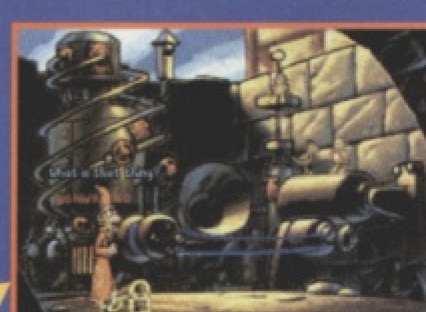


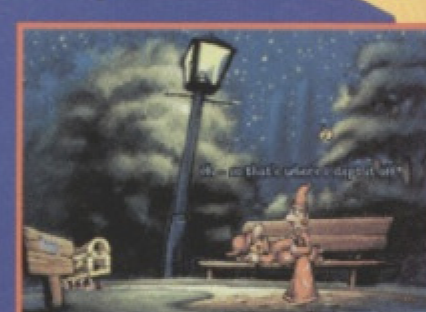


GREAT ARTS

The gameplay inspiration for Discworld, indeed the initiator of the whole genre is Lucasfilm's Monkey Island (we're ignoring some proto-examples like Maniac Mansion here). This pirate adventure appeared at the turn of the decade and established the PC 'point and click' adventure. The precepts of the genre are simple: characters walk and explore scrolling landscape locations, using a simple cursor to select objects to examine, use or walk to. The game is constructed from a series of puzzles requiring objects, often in combination. Discworld fulfils all these criteria.









KITCHEN



LIBRARIAN



LIBRARY

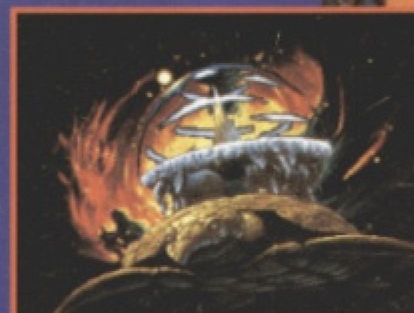


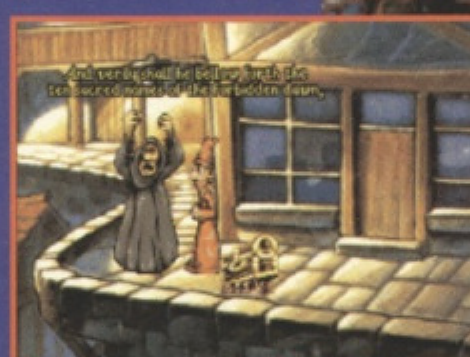
LITERA VITE

Discworld is the first series video game attempt to make a book come to life. The graphics are very reminiscent of the artwork used on Pratchett's books, and the plot and script, with Pratchett's guidance, is much like a Discworld novel unfolding. Psygnosis have done much to keep the characters faithful to their literary models in appearance, animation and action, and the familiar locations of Ankh-Morpok and wider locations of the Disc figure in the massive adventure.

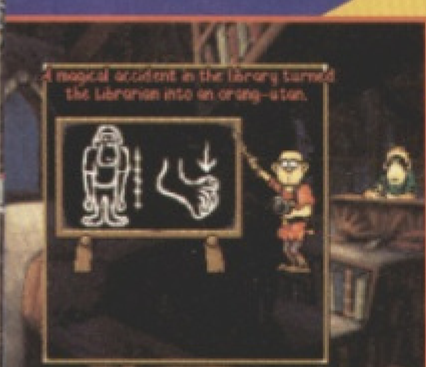








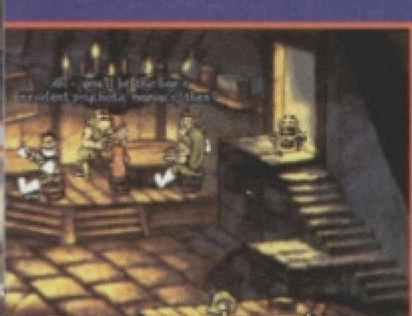
The good thing about cassocks is that they hide your cellulite. Get one on order for Princess Di.





PYTHON WARS

The style of humour in the Discworld series has many resonances with the British tradition of bizarre comedy epitomised by Monty Python, the TV show of the early 1970s which has made the careers of its six co-creators. Unsurprisingly one of them, Eric Idle, pops up to add his vocal talents here (along with, fact fans, ex-Doctor Who Jon Pertwee). Coincidentally, a similar project, Blazing Dragons is being undertaken by BMG in America. That's if you count a point-and-click adventure using cartoon graphics set in a fantasy/mediaeval milieu using comic voice-over as similar. An ex-Python is also employed on this one, Terry Jones. The prospect of a Monty-adventure sales war is very much in prospect. The other ex-Pythons are too busy doing big budget movies to have time with video games.

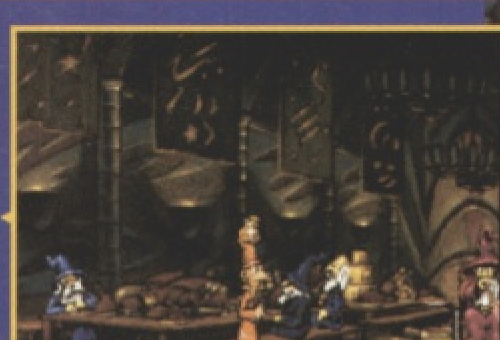




RY



RINCEWIND'S ROOM



DINING ROOM



Lemmings 3



BY: PSYGNOSIS

GAME TYPE: PUZZLE

PLAYERS: 1

PRICE: £39.99

RELEASE: MAY

COMPLETE

The Lemmings saga is a puzzle game phenomenon that has been selling bucketloads for the last five years. First appearing on PC, the green-haired little fellas with suicidal tendencies have since appeared on nearly every format you'd care to mention. 3D Lemmings, the latest and most sophisticated instalment in the saga, is about to appear on Saturn.

For the benefit of the uninitiated, Lemmings is a true classic with the unusual aim of actually saving lives. On each level, the screen gradually fills with a procession of furry rodents. These little chaps, who at first glance all look identical in blue coats and fuzzy green hair, march around, seemingly oblivious to their fates – like brainless sheep they herd themselves into deadly machinery, down lethal holes or over sheer cliffs. As a god-like observer of these tragic events, your task is to try to save as many lives as possible by manipulating the little fellas into engineering escape routes through each screen's exit section. This is done by activating certain lemmings' particular skills at just the right moment in their funeral march – some are diggers, some are blockers, some are builders and so on.

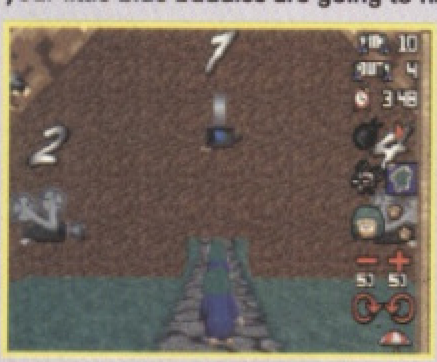


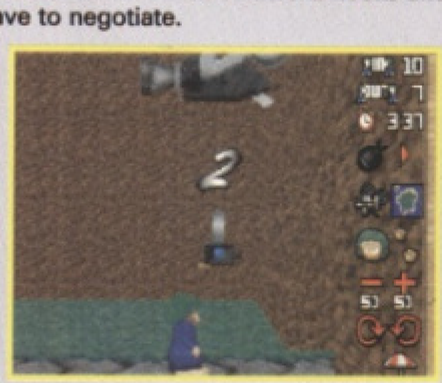
As the little critters continue their inexorable journey onto the Saturn with a new visual twist to their old tricks, your job is to save the species. But theirs is an arduous journey fraught with danger, and sacrifices will have to be made...



CLOSE SURVEILLANCE

3D Lemmings is the latest version of the game, and the original format's most radical revision yet. Instead of viewing the action from a flat 2D perspective, the player is now able to rotate the view around the platforms, zooming in and out of important scenes. The feeling of visual freedom is further enhanced by four principal camera positions on each level, allowing you to poke your nose into the more awkward nooks and crannies your little blue buddies are going to have to negotiate.









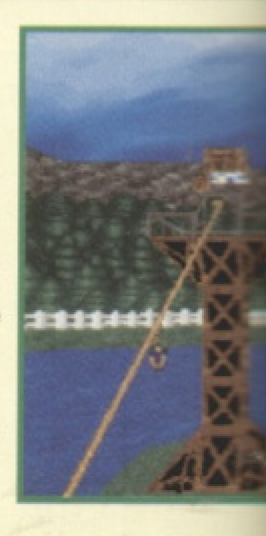
The Dennis Pennis appreciation society try their hands at spring jumping, whilst insulting lots of gullible celebrities.



The Chernobyl droning experiment goes horribly wrong, and the world is inundated with Marcus' Hair Hell creatures.

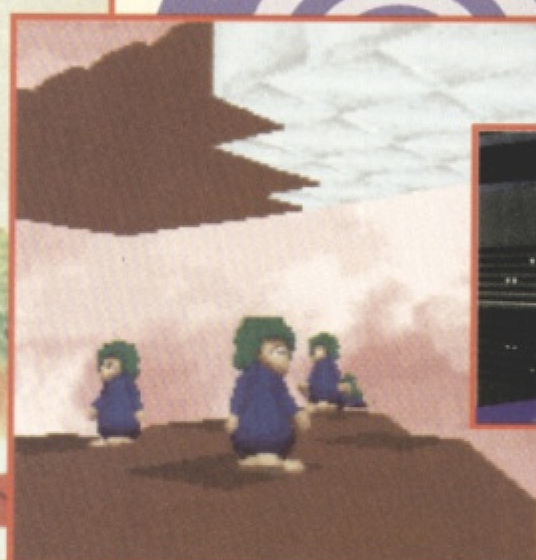
TECHNO TROUBLE

The most impressive new functions involve deployment of the teleporter (you'll need to dart from on side of the level to the other to find out how your Lemmings are getting on) and the rescue of marine style lemmings who glide down a rope from a high tower, marching to their doom on touch down. Elsewhere, suicidal Lemmings hop to their doom on a series of trampolines.











VIRTUAL LEMMING



Another of 3D Lemmings' souped up features is the opportunity it gives you to view the action from the first person (first lemming?) perspective of one of your troops. You can step inside their shoes and get a taste of the tricky terrain they totter along. This is especially useful when it proves impossible to solve puzzles partially obscured by the usual camera angles.



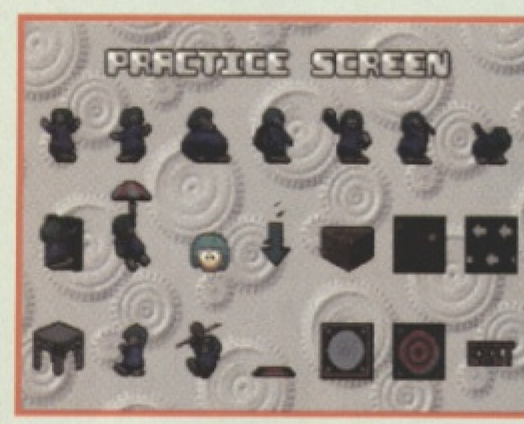


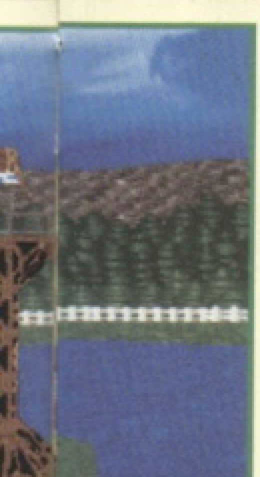


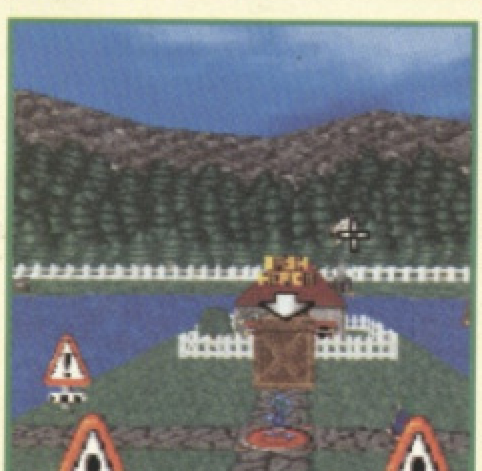


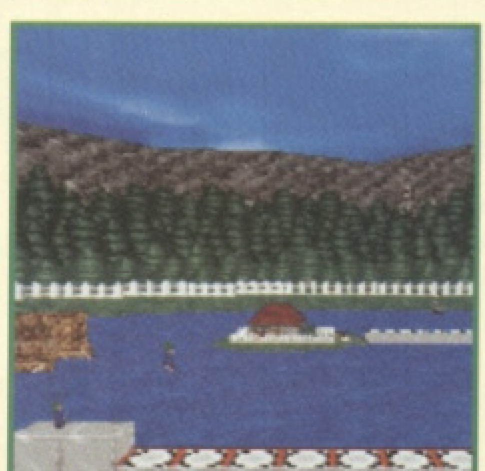
RANK AND FILE

The hordes of Lemmings themselves have their ranks swelled by the addition of some talented new creatures. Claustrophobic Lemmings join rope gliding alongside the more traditional climbers, builders and blockers. There are also new objects, such as springs, teleporters and quicksand to help or hinder you along the way.











"Fancy jumping off that cliff?" said one Lemming to another. "Who do you think I am?" he replied, putting a shotgun to his head.

STEVE'S TIPS



"There once was a spider who swallowed a fly, I don't know why he swallowed the fly!" Well I do, it's because I was hungry. Yes, it's that time of the month again folks – the Tips Bat morphed into the Tips Fly and then I decided to eat him. Now, as the tips spider, I have treble the tipping power. Here's a hint straight from the heart of the tips web: edge along the garden wall and squeeze through the small crack below the window sill. Follow the piping all the way along until you reach a hole. You'll emerge in the plug hole, and be stuck in the bath. Awesome. Address your spindly tips to: THE TIPS SPIDER, TIPS WEB, MEAN MACHINES SEGA, PRIORY COURT, 30-32 FARRINGDON LANE, LONDON, EC1R 3AU. As usual, a Saturn game is the prize for the best Saturn tip of the month.



SATURN



STREET FIGHTER ALPHA

SECRET CHARACTERS, DRAMATIC BATTLE

This is the best 2D beat 'em up currently doing the rounds in my humble opinion, so it seems only right that we should show you how to play as the boss characters. All of these should be done on the player select screen

BISON: Hold **L** and the highlight the Random box. Now press **Back, Back , Down, Down, Back, Down Down**, and then press **Jab and Medium punch** together.
GOUKI: Hold **L** and press again move over the Random box. Now press **Back, Back, Back, Down, Down, Down, Jab and Medium punch** simultaneously.
DAN: Hold **L** and **R** and press **Medium Punch, Low Punch, Low Kick, Medium Kick, and then Medium Punch.**

And to make the Dramatic battle option available, have a bash at doing this. Start a two player game in arcade mode. Leave the characters on Ryu and Ken, and both players Hold L button and press Up twice. Then, both players must release the L button and press Up twice again. Now player one should hold X and player two hold Z until the game starts. Phew!





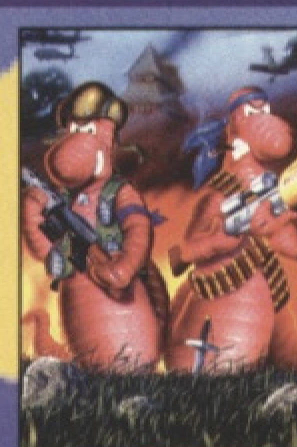




WORMS

SPECIAL WEAPONS

Having lasted only two games in the office Worms league, this cheat will hopefully make my future efforts a bit longer-lasting. Go to the weapon select option and move OFF exit.
Now press **C, Z, Z, C, Z, Z, C, Z** and **Z.** This should bring up the Sheep, Mini Gun and the Banana Bombs.





X-MEN: CHILDREN OF THE ATOM

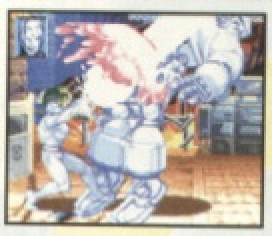


ARCADE MODE

This is from the useless tips department, and although it doesn't actually do that much to the game, it makes for an interesting little quirk. To make the game look as if it were the actual arcade game, and bring up messages like 'Insert Coin' instead of the usual 'Press Start', simply hold **down A, C and Start** on the second controller when you turn on the machine, and then the arcade start-up screen will appear. Whilst you are playing **L** inserts another coin, and **R** becomes the start button. To perform Storm's Hail Shower, use start button instead of L or R.











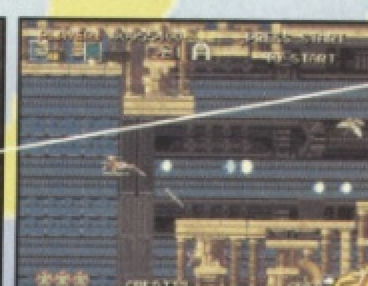
DARIUS

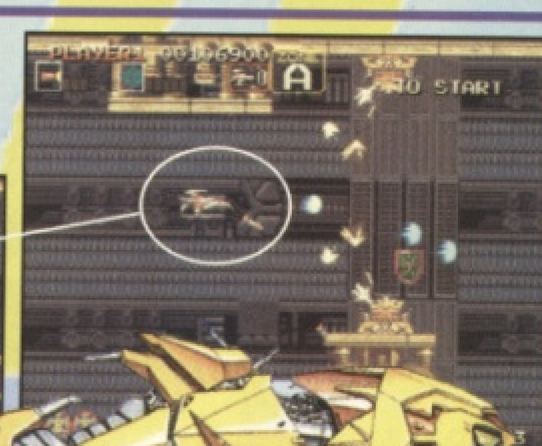
RAPID FIRE

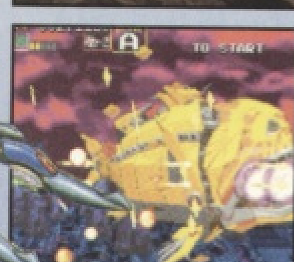
Just a quick one here, continuing on from last month's cheats. On the Start/Option screen **Hold X** and press **Z, C, L, B, Left, R and L**. This should give your ship a rapid fire option. A noise will sound to let you know it's worked.



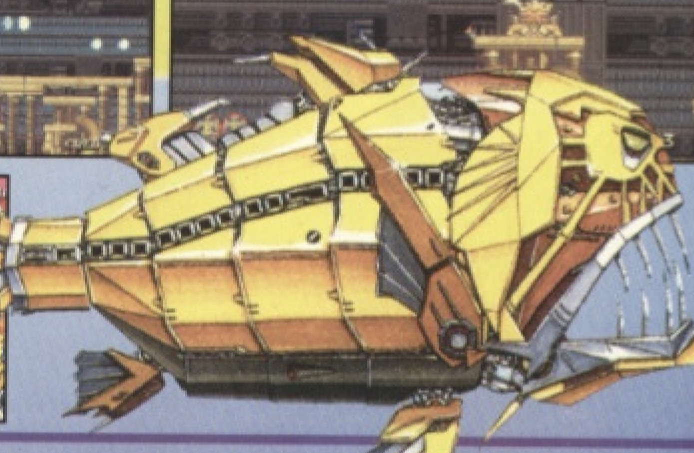












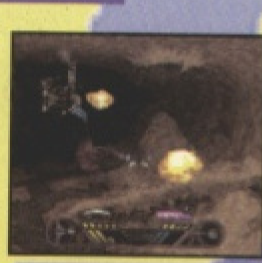
TITAN WARS

CHEATS AHOY!

Crap game, lots of cheats. Well, I suppose it'll get the game a little extra coverage. Anyway, all of these should be entered when the game is paused.

Programmer Heads	C, Right, A, Z, Y.
Cloaking	Down, Right, A, C, Up, Left, A.
Death Star Trench	Right, Right, Down, Down.
Fade To Black	X, Y, Z, Z, Y.
Invincibility	B, Up, Left, Left, Y.
All Weapons + Shields	A, Left, Left.
House Hunt	A, Right, Down.
Nine Lives	B, Up, Down, Down, Y.







JOHNNY BAZOOKATONE



LEVEL SELECT

Crap game ahoy! Let us all pity poor G. Ritchie from Co. Antrim, who foolishly bought this game. But let us also rejoice that he sent in this cheat. Go to the password screen and enter aaaaa as your password. Now press Start and the game will come up in Debug mode, then you can select your level. If it doesn't work, you can all go round and duff him over.











32X



VIRTUA FIGHTER

PLAY AS DURAL

Again, this one is for the benefit of all the phone pests (we can have you locked up, you know), and it's a really simple thing to do. Highlight Akira, then keep pressing left and right, flicking from Akira to Jacky and back again. Repeat this several times between these two characters. After a few goes, Dural's head should appear. Thanks to Ryan Button from Leicester for that one.









MEGADRIVE

MORTAL KOMBAT 3

QUICK FATALITIES

Graham Hovell from Truro in Cornwall sent us in this sneaky way of performing the fatalities for MK 3.

First, activate the Killer Kodes cheat:
(C, Right, A, Left, A, Up, C, Right, A, Left, A and Up), and select it.
Then highlight **'Quick End'** and select **'Fatalities 1.'** He says that you can now do each of the fighter finishing moves by doing the last two button presses in the sequence. To do the other fatalities you must do the same, but highlight **'Fatalities 2'** instead. Super.







MADDEN NFL '96

HIDDEN TEAMS

Get ready for this tips marathon. Untold secret teams are coming your way, so this is for the benefit of all those people who keep phoning up wanting the codes. Now you can leave the dog and bone alone and stop pestering us.

'84 49ers: CABACCA
'82 Redskins: CBAAAAC
'75 Cowboys: ACABBAB
'72 Redskins: CBAACBB
'75 Steelers: BCBCBB
'77 Broncos: ACBCAAC
'93 Cowboys: ABCBBAC
'76 Raiders: BABBACA
'63 Bears: ABBCABC
'68 Jets: BCABCBA
'69 Chiefs: ACCCCBA
'94 49ers: CAABCAA
'76 Patriots: BBCBAAC
'83 Redskins: CACCBAA
'86 Giants: BCAAACC
'88 Bengals: ABBCCCB
'77 Bears: ABBACAB
'79 Rams: BACBABC
'89 49ers CAACBAC

'71 Dolphins: BBACBCC
'91 Bills: ABAACAC
'95 EA Team: CCAACAB
'83 Raiders: BAACCAC
'84 Dolphins: BACCCAA
'91 Rams: BABCCAB
'91 Redskins: CACACBC
'78 Seahawks: CABCBAB
'66 Packers: ACCBACC
'94 Chargers: BCCBCAB
'78 Cowboys: ABCCCCA
'70 Colts: AABCACC
'89 Broncos: ACBABCB
'77 Cowboys: ACAABCC
'81 Chargers: BCCCBBA
'81 49ers: CABBBCC
'84 Rams: BACACCA
'62 Texans: BAABACB
'85 Patriots: BBCABAA

'70 Cowboys: ACACCBC
'71 Cowboys: ACACABA
'76 Vikings: BBBABAB
'64 Colts: AACABCA
'82 Dolphins: BBAABAC
'87 Broncos: ACBBBAA
'66 Chiefs: BAAABBC
'92 Bills: ABAAAAA
'80 Raiders: BABABBB
'73 Vikings: BBBBCBC
'88 49ers: CABAABB
'68 Rams: BACBCCB
'78 Steelers: BCBBCAC
'74 Steelers: BCCBBCA
'63 Chargers: CAAACBB
'67 Packers: ACCABCA
'62 Lions: ACBCCBB
'75 Cardinals: BCCACCC
All 50's Team: CCABBBA
All 70's Team: CCACCCB
Hall of Fame 2: CBACACC
NFLPA 2: CCBBBAC
NFLPA 4: CCBCCCA
AFC Pro Bowl: CBBACBA

'70 Giants: BCABAAB
'73 Bills: ABACACA
'60 Eagles: BCBAACB
'81 Bengals: ABCACAA
'80 Eagles: BCACBBC
'69 Vikings: BBBCBCB
'73 Dolphins: BBABABB
'90 Bills: ABABBBB
'74 Vikings: BBBBABA
'69 Vikings: BBBCBCB
'90 Giants: BBCCBCA
'65 Browns:AACBBBC
'79 Buccaneers: CACAABA
'79 Saints: BBCBCBB
'80 Falcons: AABBBCA
'79 Steelers: BCBBAAA
'87 Redskins: CACBBCB

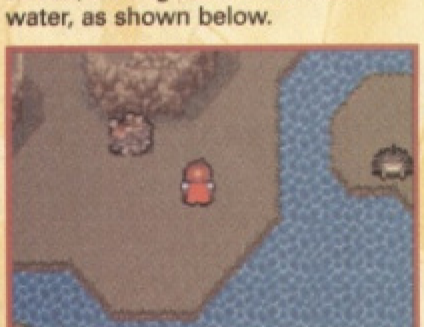
All 60's Team: CCACABC
Hall of Fame 1: CBABBCA
NFLPA 1: CCBACAA
NFLPA 3: CCBCABB
All Madden: CBBAAAB
NFC Pro Bowl: CBBBBBC



Now the early levels of Shining Wisdom have been successfully negotiated, it's time to get down to the nitty gritty of the game. No longer do you have to ponce about with your sword as stronger weapons become available. Starting where we left off, we kick off the second part of our guide at the Lost Forest.

THE LOST FOREST

Once you get to point 4 from the Vale of Gudo map (see last month's guide), no further progress can be made until you get the magical hands. To get these you must take a journey into the Lost Forest. From the start, equip your newly acquired slide boots and use them to slide under the logs, thus opening up the rest of the forest. You should head for the bottom left corner, which leads to the water section and the hands. Once outside, the water will prevent you from progressing, so re-equip your heavy boots and stomp next to the turtles, kicking them across the water, as shown below.





They now provide a stepping stone to the other islands in the middle of the lake. The turtles can be bounced on the corners of the rocks as well, deflecting them off at other angles towards different sections of the water. If one of the turtles doesn't go where you want it to, simply go back into the forest and re enter for all of them to be restored to their original positions. Firstly, get to all of the islands and open any chests, and then try to get to the bottom left corner to gain a purple orb. Then you have to make your way far right, and up to the top right corner, where you'll find another log. This leads to a previously unreachable part of the Lost Forest.



Now go through to the forest, and follow the path round until you reach the chest containing the magical hands. These hands will enable you to fire a boxing glove at medium range to hit the switches in the Vale of Gudo. You can now get to the boss.



VALE OF GUDO 2

Now that you have the hands, go back to the Vale and, more specifically points 5 and 6. Stomp through the floor as shown, and use the hands on the switches. You'll now be able to go through to the boss. The rock monster is top easy really. Using the hands, fire at the worm-type thing as it swoops down to the floor. Each section of the beast must be killed, and if timed right the glove can hit all of them in one go. Stand in the middle of the floor, and the monster just circles around you, leaving you free to attack at will. Once defeated, the fairy will appear and give you the whisper shell.

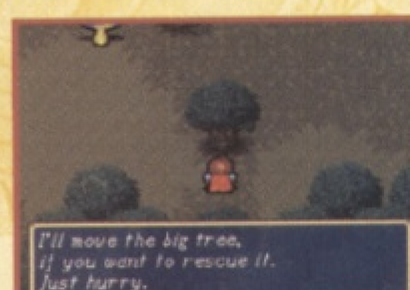


Each part of the monster requires one hit to kill.



LOST FOREST 2

Now go back to the forest, find the tree pictured (it's around the centre of the map, just below the three blue mushrooms) and use the whisper shell on him. After getting over his surprise at being able to speak to somebody, he unlocks the way to the spider boss and, more importantly, the princess.

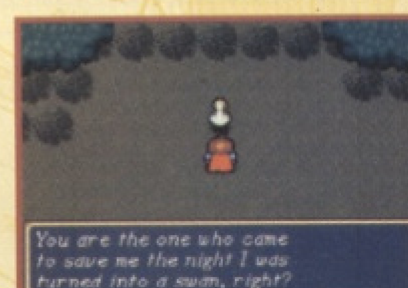


The Trent will take away the tree blocking the way to the spider, so use your newly acquired whisper shell to communicate with him.

To defeat the spider, you must always keep on the move. Contrary to what you may think, the sword is actually better for this guy, as you can get more attacks in quickly. Try to stay behind the spider as much as possible so you can attack and still miss his mini spider webs. Once defeated, the swan will be free, so use the whisper shell to talk to her. You'll then have to go to the Thousand Year Tree to see the hermit.



When the spider jumps it attemps to land in the spot you are standing in. Just keep moving.



The swan will follow you, so take it to the Hermit to get her back to her old self again.

THOUSAND YEAR TREE: HERMITS ABODE

This level isn't exactly tough, as there aren't many things to trouble you until you reach the boss. Basically, there are five levels inside the tree, and stemming out from each are branches that you are free to wander about on. The only things blocking your path are the patches of leaves that cause damage should you wander into them. To make

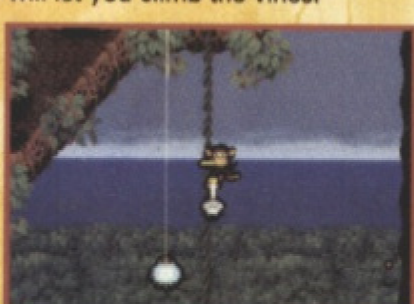


them retract, you must stamp on the buttons and they will disappear for a short period of time.





When you enter the tree, go up as far as you can and take the first exit out from the left hand side as we look at it. Then follow the branch all the way left. Stamp on the button to retract the grass, and open the chest to get the monkey suit which will let you climb the vines.



Your aim is to get to the top of the tree and destroy the giant cactus which guards the hermit. To defeat the prickly fiend, you must destroy the mini-replicas of itself that it spits out (using the sword is best) and equip the slide boots once the giant plant is alone in bouncing around. Slide into him and he'll be thrown into the air, landing upside down on the floor. Now switch back to the sword, and hit him as many times as possible until he turns back up the right way. Now repeat the process until he is finished. The hermit will appear to cure the princess – once she is back to normal, head back to the castle for the showdown.







OGEDAN REVISITED

By nipping back to the castle, you will be presented with a dilemma. There are two princesses, and you have to decide which one to kill and which one to keep alive. Here's a little hint – kill the one on the left. She will then turn into Karry, and you'll be instructed to follow her to the Royal Crypt, where you'll meet the rock boss thing. Before you fight it, talk to the minister and Kaipa, who'll each give you a healing herb. Defeating it is simple – use your magic hands to hit the blob in the centre while avoiding the outer spinning rocks. When defeated, the minister will appear, and guide you back to the King, who'll tell you that the treasury is now open. Go there (it is straight up from the main entrance in the town) and you'll receive the Power Gloves for your troubles. The Sand Labyrinth is your next destination.



SLIDE RULE

Once you've obtained the slide boots, lots of secret passages become available to you. By walking up to an obscured piece of rock (shown) and sliding, you'll go through and into a mini-cave containing a chest. There are lots of these scattered about, and it's basically a case of keeping an eye out for the shape of the rocks and trying your luck. There are a couple of orbs to be found, loads of angel wings and record books and, most bizarrely, a judo suit which seems to be completely useless.







Shining Wisdom

SAND LABYRINTH

This is where it gets tricky. It's a pretty big labyrinth and is inaccessible until you have the mole gloves which are located on the second floor. Follow the labels on the map in number order...




Using the power gloves, pick up the statue...


And take it here to open the door to the worms.



Defeating the sand worms is difficult, but if you move quickly it makes it easier. Wait until you see the sand churning, and this will tell you where they will emerge from. Now move as near to the top of the screen as possible whilst keeping near the rumbles. When the worms pop up, hit them from behind with your sword. As long as you keep out of the way of their fire beams, you'll sustain hardly any damage. Keep repeating this to finish them off and get the spark orb.







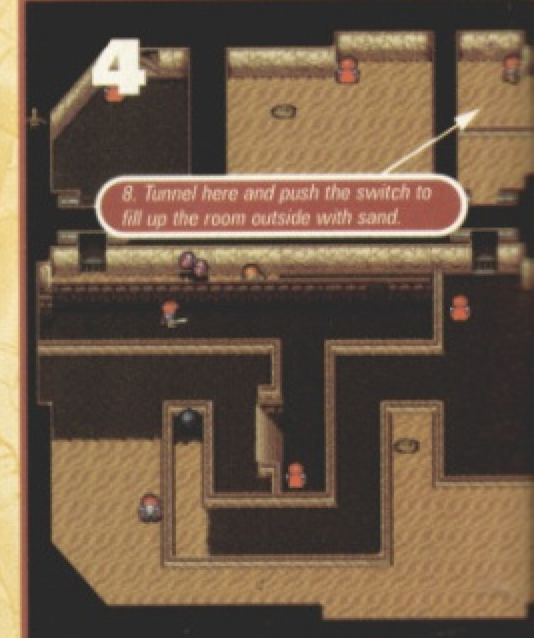
THE OTHER SIDE

Hurrah! The first orb is under your belt, and the adventure really begins. Make your way through the caverns (if you aren't already there), and find the lightning symbol etched into the rock to the left of the thousand year tree. If you equip the slide boots and the newly acquired spark orb, sliding it into the panel will transport you to the other side of the lake. You are now free to enter the Hobbit village and the water labyrinth. At the moment, the village isn't of any use to you (if you are short on life however, find the well in the top right of the map and drink from it) so head straight for the water labyrinth.



WATER LABYRINTH

Despite its size, this doesn't provide the biggest of challenges. From the start, take the first right you come to (when the floor becomes ice) and go to the far end of the room. Using the power gloves, throw two bombs at each of the cyclops blokes in the wall to destroy them. Then, go through the gap in the right hand side and down the steps to find a chest. Go back to the gaps that were left by the 'clops, and down the other set of stairs. Then slide into the plate on the wall





again (with the slide boots and spark orb), and you'll be taken to another part of the labyrinth. Follow the path round, and push in the circular switch. This then opens the door straight up from the first icy room. Go through here, and into the room full of water. The thin path to the left leads to another chest. Once you've collected this, head back and take the path to the right. You'll emerge in a big icy room with cracked plates in the floor. Stomp on the one shown to fall down, and push the switch directly up from where you land.



This should have now opened the door at the top of the watery room. Go through, and down to the next level. Go left from the start and touch the switch, quickly running across the crumbling tiles onto the temporary blocks the switch activates. Then head along the right path. Follow the rooms round (there is only one way you can go), through the big water room, and push the switch that you find. Now you have to track back to the crumbly platform and fall down, as there's no way of getting back. Take the exit in the top right of the room you land in, and follow that round (ignoring the other cyclops for the moment) until you can go back up a level. When you emerge from the stairs, go left. You'll end up back at the start of the crumbling platform. Touch the switch as before and run across, but this time go left instead of right. Again, follow the rooms round, down a level and into a room with three panels in the wall. Each panel will warp you all around the level when you slide into them. Try to get to a room with a square 'pond' in it, and a door to the left. Come out of here, use the bombs again to blow up the two cyclops and then go through the door at the top to reach Banbo.





Defeating Banbo is easy, but the flying lily pads prov a tricky hazard. Equip the sword, keeping the accelerator fully charged, and run round the island until Banbo appears. Then hit him a couple of times before he disappears and carry on running. The chances are that he'll appear in front of as you run round, meaning you'll be able to get more hits on him. He takes about 8 or so hits to defeat. Your reward is the freeze orb.











11. Push this switch to open the door to the colosseum, and the sand worms.

POWER OF ORBS





ICE SHIELD

By combining the Magical Hands and the Freeze orb, an Ice shield appears, blocking any laser beams preventing further progress.





ELECTRICITY

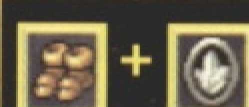
This is the key to making tracks when you reach the Jump Labyrinth. By throwing the ball of energy into the rings, they'll disappear and create a path for you.



WATER FREEZE



This is needed to get into the Mirror Labyrinth, and also to make it through the Jump Labyrinth. Basically, it freezes any water that is too deep for you to walk through. It also freezes certain items, like bombs, increasing the length of time you can carry them before the fuse starts to burn down.



SPARK SLIDE

This is probably the weakest of all the magic featured. When you slide, a flurry of samll sparks appear at the end of your feet. A bit poor.

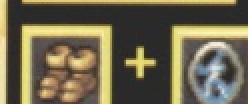


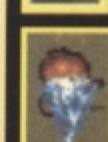


RANGE SPARK



A barrage of small electricity particles come shooting out from your feet when these two items are combined, causing anyone in close proximity, to be instantly destroyed. However, this has a long recovery time, if it misses.





ICE SLIDE

The better of the two slides, this has a shield of ice to protect you as you slide, and cause damage if it hits. The length and speed of the slide is also increased when this is equipped.

Even if you've negotiated this mammoth part of the guide, there is still a way to go yet. So if you want to progress further, head for the Jump Labyrinth. Use the wisdom wisely, my child.



BY: SNK

RELEASE: OUT NOW (IMPORT)

PRICE: £70 (INC CART)

GAME TYPE: BEAT 'EM UP

BREAK DOWN

ORIGINALITY

CHALLENGE

ACTION

STRATEGY

REFLEXES

1-2 PLAYERS

OPTIONS

CONTROL
JOYPAD

GAME DIFFICULTY
HARD

CONTINUES
INFINITE

SKILL LEVELS
8

RESPONSIVENESS
AWKWARD

ORIGIN

Made appearances in the arcades, and on the hugely popular (not) Neo Geo system, before SNK decided to port it over to Saturn.

GAME AIM

Please. Spare me this again. Beat up some bloke or woman, with magic attacks etc. Yawn, Yawn.

BEAT THIS

GET TO RUGAL



Hallo and welcome to the Unoriginality Oscars, here in Hollyoaks, the home of all crap actors and some the most unoriginal game ideas of the century. It's reached that time of the year again – that time when we honour the dross that is left out of the conventional Oscars, and leave behind the Capcoms of this world. So, without further ado, let the ceremony begin, and we start with your host, You Ain't Got A Bob Hope.

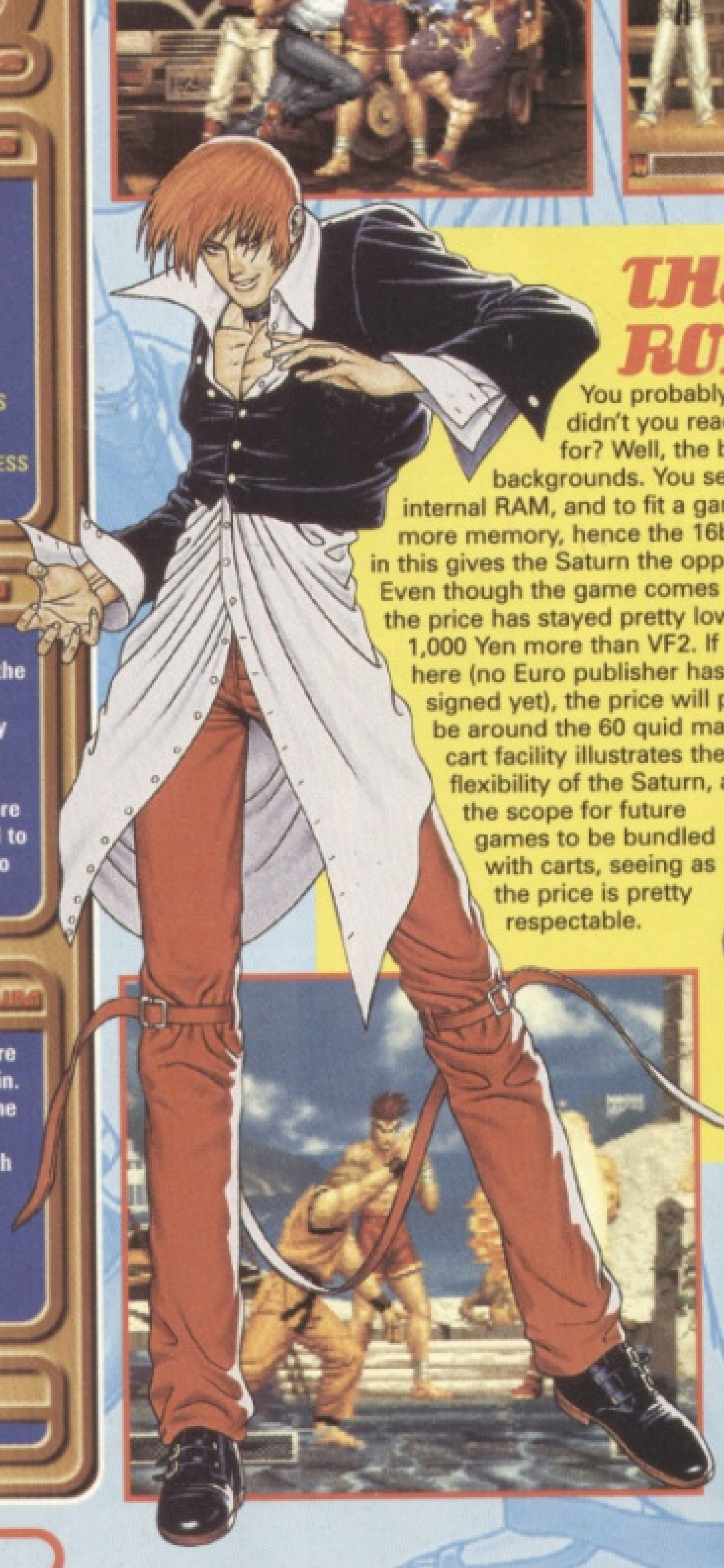
"Thank you ladies and gentlemen, and welcome to this, the fourth annual Oscars ceremony. Now I know you hate all this babble, so we'll move straight on with the first award, Most Unoriginal Game Concept. And the nominees are: King of the Fighters, for another one on one beat 'em up; SNK for churning up yet another beat 'em up; and the Neo Geo for being the only computer made for one-on-one beat 'em ups. I think you'll agree that it's a bit of tough one to call, so lets take a look at each of them. KoF: (cue numerous punching noises), SNK (I'm sure there should be a W and an A in the name) and Neo Geo (cue scrapyard noise) And the winner is, tension here, ALL OF THEM, because they are all, unoriginal, mindless pap.







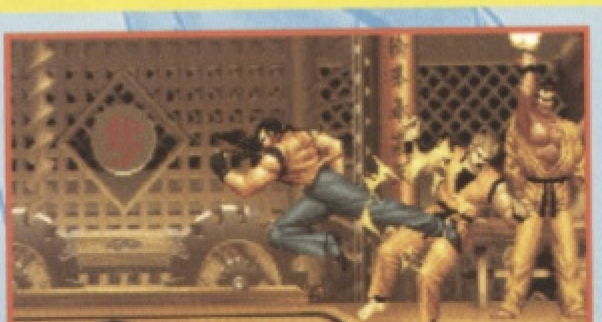


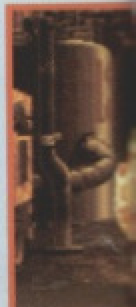


THEY DUAL ROM, ROM, ROM

You probably know about the cartridge by now, (if you don't, why didn't you read the feature last issue?) but what exactly is it there for? Well, the bulk of the cartridge's memory is used for backgrounds. You see, when the Saturn loads a game it stores it in the internal RAM, and to fit a game the size of King of the Fighters on it, it needs some more memory, hence the 16bit ROM cart that comes with the game. When plugged in this gives the Saturn the opportunity to pick out bits of info as and when it needs it. Even though the game comes supplied with the cart, the price has stayed pretty low, being only 1,000 Yen more than VF2. If it appears here (no Euro publisher has been signed yet), the price will probably be around the 60 quid mark. The cart facility illustrates the flexibility of the Saturn, and the scope for future games to be bundled with carts, seeing as the price is pretty respectable.











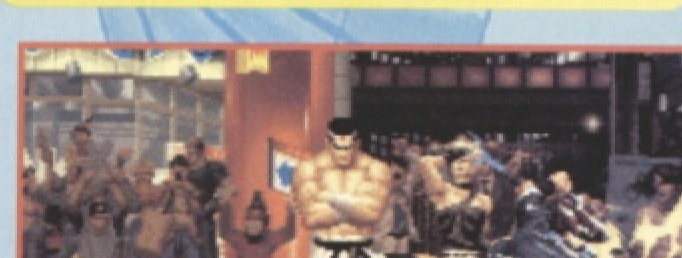
ALL FOR ONE!

Probably the best thing about King of the Fighters is the opportunity it gives you to play in the team battle mode. Although the team battle is nothing new, it's the magnitude of this version that is attractive. There are 24 playable characters to choose from, and each of these is already split up into teams of three, each team with their own background. When you select the team battle mode, you are given the choice of keeping the groups the fighters are already in, or selecting any three to form a new team. The good thing about this is that you can obviously pick the three characters you are best with, to make an unstoppable outfit, rising to the top of the fighting ladder. Maybe.











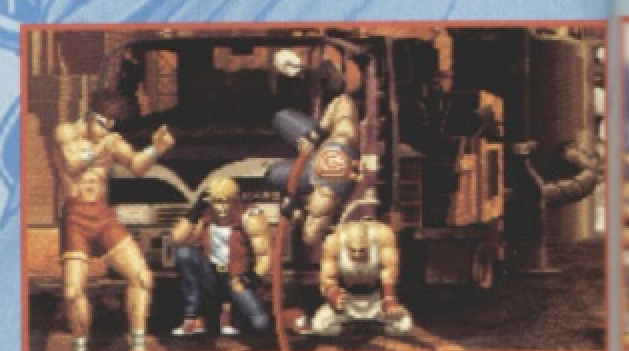






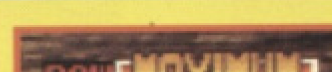




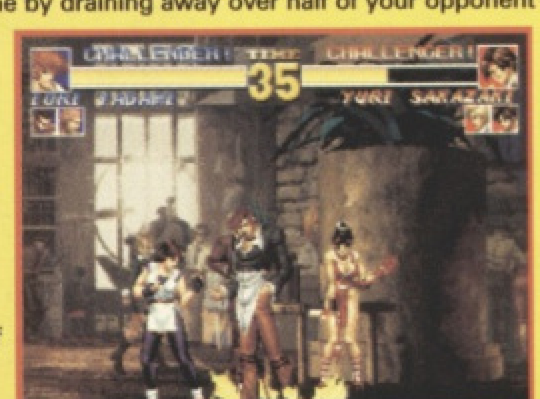




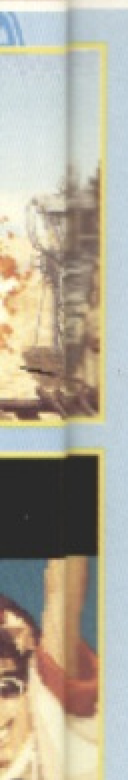
NOW THERE'S A NOVELTY



There are two ways to execute the Super attacks that every character has. These are the ultra moves that can get you back into the game by draining away over half of your opponent's energy. If you can get a bit of time in the round, by holding down L, the character will charge up his energy bar until it reaches Maximum. This is the first place you can do the moves, and the other is probably where you are more likely to pull them off. When your energy bar gets below a certain level, it begins to flash red, and at this point you can use the super attacks as many times as you like, until either you are dead, or your opponent is. The moves consist mainly of a rotation following by a button press, meaning they are quick to slip in on the unsuspecting fighter.



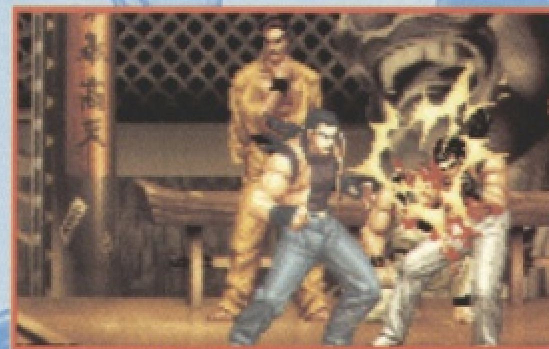


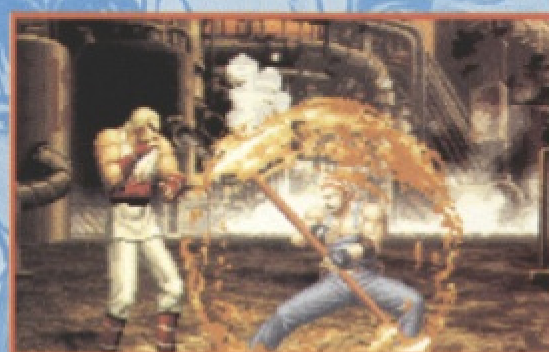


ANIMATION IS WHAT YOU NEED

There is a wealth of animations and little poses that the characters do in the game. So many, in fact, that the R button is used solely for taunting your opponent during the match. When the characters are in three player mode and are standing in the background, they respond to how their fighting team-mate is getting on by wincing every time he/she gets hit, clapping and generally looking pleased when the character is doing well. They also look dejected when the character has been defeated, with some collapsing in a heap on the floor.









COMMENT



STEVE

Psssssssstttttttttttt. That's the sound of me being let down by this game. Punctured in fact. Having played the pre-production version before, and being greatly impressed, for some reason I am now greatly disappointed in this. I can't see this having any of the appeal and playability possessed by Street Fighter Alpha, X-Men or even Darkstalkers. The moves are all far too similar, the characters seem to lack the imagination to challenge the wonders from the Capcom games, and it quickly becomes annoying. Sometimes, it's even hard to see where the extra memory from the cartridge has gone. But, despite all my criticisms, I can sense that there is a good game here trying to get out, but in my hands, it just seemed to stick its head out before diving back in again. Some of you, if not many of you, will see this as possible alternative to the trundle of the Capcom beat 'em up conveyer belt, but others won't find it the least bit interesting. Much as I tried to like this, I'm afraid it just isn't good enough.

COMMENT



MARCUS

It doesn't matter how many extra meg you use to spruce up your backgrounds, if your beat 'em up is a fundamentally staid and unimaginative punchfest lacking the imagination and humour of recent Capcom efforts then it just isn't going to make an impact. The extra details and animations in the backgrounds are rarely interesting enough to merit mention – I would have much preferreed it if the extra memory had been used to enhance this perfect, if unremarkable, coin-op conversion.

GRAPHICS 80

▲Some of the backgrounds are really well detailed...
▼...yet others look like 16 bit alternatives.

ANIMATION 84

▲The people in the back, and the general movements of the main characters, are all fluid and well drawn.

MUSIC 79

▲Nothing overly special, but there are a few nice tunes.

EFFECTS 82

▲Loads of sampled hits, speech and thuds accompany all of the game. And it's all clear as well.

PLAYABILITY 78

▲The team mode is a very good idea...
▼...but its execution leaves a lot to be desired. No real satisfaction is gained from playing.

LASTABILITY 79

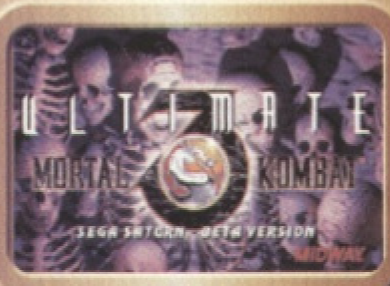
▲Loads of characters and four styles of play mean there is a bit to find.
▼Yet it still becomes boring too quickly.

OVERALL

Could have been a potential Capcom beater, but has fallen flat on its face. More like Chamber Maid of the Fighters.

79

ULTIMATE MORTAL KOMBAT



BY GT INTERACTIVE

RELEASE JUNE

PRICE £44.99

GAME TYPE BEAT 'EM UP

BREAK DOWN

1-8 PLAYERS

ORIGINALITY

CHALLENGE

ACTION

STRATEGY

REFLEXES

OPTIONS

CONTROL
JOYPAD

GAME DIFFICULTY
HARD

CONTINUES
ADJUSTABLE

SKILL LEVELS
6

RESPONSIVENESS
EXCELLENT

ORIGIN

Created by the Williams pairing of Boon and Tobias, this is the fourth version of Mortal Kombat to appear on home formats. Originally a coin-op.

GAME AIM

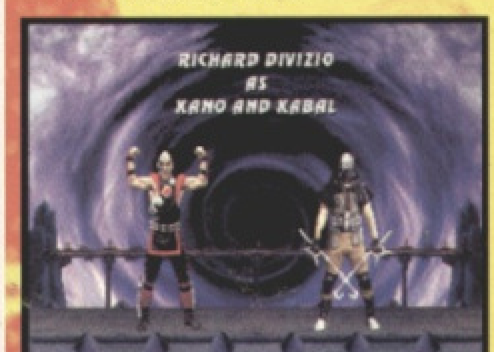
We've said this so many times over the last few months that it's getting boring. Beat up someone. Ho hum.

BEAT THIS

REACH MOTARO ON WARRIOR

So there you are, faced with the monstrosity of a half-human, half-robot thing. It's a battle to the death, and no mercy will be shown (unless you choose to grant it). Blood is the order of the day, and ripping your opponent limb from limb is also strongly advised. Then you get the immortal words, "Finish Him/Her," and this is your chance to impress the onlooking Shao Kahn, so what do you do? Turn yourself into a snowman. Only in Mortal Kombat.

Yes it's that time of year when we dust off the the Dettox (for all those nasty cuts and scratches) and prepare to decapitate a few people as Mortal Kombat returns to torment Mary Whitehouse and sell bucket loads of games to the gore-loving public. This isn't any old conversion, however. This is the Ultimate version, and by far the best of the series. The difference between this and the other versions is that it features the most characters – an initial total of 20 to play as – and of course the obligatory secret warriors. And coupled with the greatly improved combo potential, the programmers appear at first glance to have thought of everything. But as we all know in the cliché business, never judge a book by its cover, so let MEAN MACHINES be your guide as we venture into the places no other man dare go. This is even more dangerous than the bin under Gus' desk – this is Kombat territory...

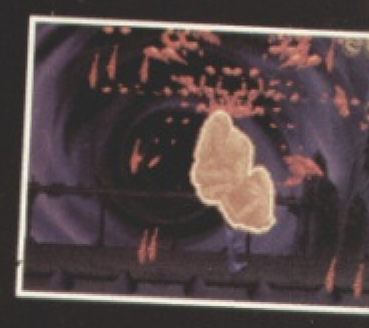












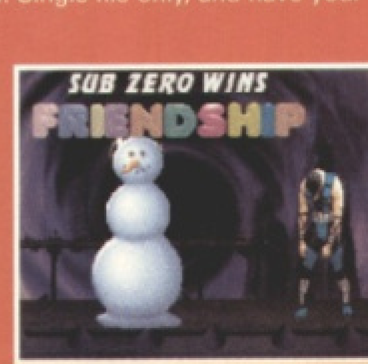


I'LL BE YOUR DOG

As we all well know, fatalities hold the initial appeal in MK, but for those wishing to humiliate their opponents a little more, friendships are here to rub your mates' noses in it a little further. Not only will you be able to give him flowers or other such loving keepsakes, but it means that you'll have beaten them without the aid of blocking. So roll up folks, as we take you through the friendship tour. Single file only, and have your money ready when you enter.



SEKTOR

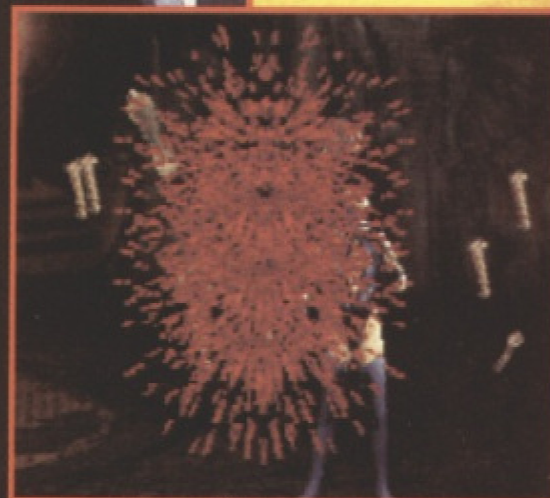


SUB ZERO



MILEENA











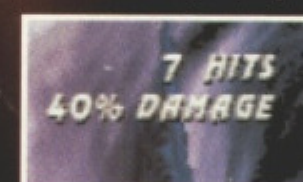


MORE HITS THAN TYSON!

Let's talk combos. Many people were a bit peeved with the first couple of games because they lacked the versatility of Streetfighter in terms of combos. But in MK3, the programmers added a whole new combo engine, giving the chance to string together



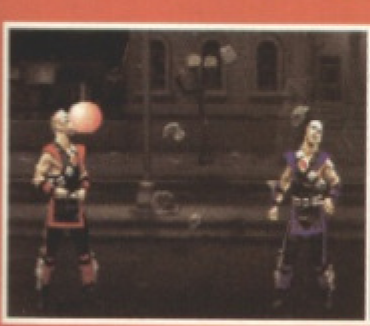
loads of hits by simply hitting the buttons in the correct order. Admittedly, this wasn't the hardest of things to pull off, and it failed to offer the variations of SF. But for this version, it seems that the programmers have had another look at it and tweaked the engine once more, making different combos a lot easier. For a start, another hit has been added to everybody's combos – a jumping punch which can then lead straight into more hits. And now, special moves can be slipped into the proceedings with a lot more ease and grace than before.







MILEENA



KANO



JADE



NIGHTWOLF



JAX

THE FAB THREE?

As you will be aware, there are three empty spaces in the character select screen when you first start the game. And do you know you the three secret people are? Well you probably do, but we'll tell you again anyway. All of these are accessed by a Kombat Kode, but we won't spoil it by telling you just yet.







MILEENA



She originates from the same race as Baraka from MK2, and conceals a nasty set of teeth beneath her mask. As with that game she has a couple of wacky fatalities – for instance, she eats a packet of nails, and spits them at her opponent. Her normal moves are the same as in the second game.

ERMAC



A lot of confusion has surrounded him, and whether he was included in an earlier arcade version of Kombat. At certain points in the game, a message would appear along the lines of Ermac 094374020384987. Ermac actually stands for Error Mac, and was a bug, but now he's a full flung character.

CLASSIC SUB ZERO



Extend a hand as we welcome back the Old Subby from the grave. Thrown in to give the nostalgic among you something to cling onto, his primary moves remain exactly the same as the older versions of MK. He has acquired two new fatalities in the refurbishment process.









With her foghorn-shaped mouth, Mileena demonstrates the art of spitting nails. Just don't ask what she farts.



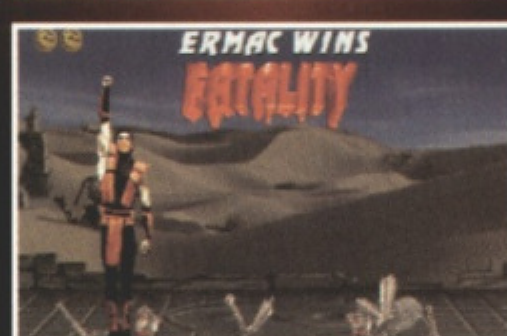
Now no longer a mere error in the coding, Ermac proves even more destructive in the flesh.



Sub Zero proves that you don't have to be a well-known brand of coffee to be regarded as 'classic.'



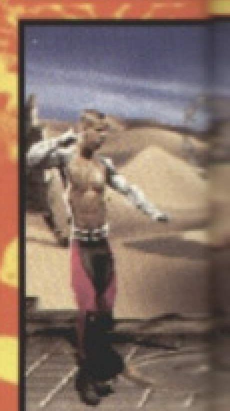
The Jodie Kidd awareness fund demonstrate their uncanny art of having no fat, and corrigated rib cages.



"All I did was lift my arm up in defeat, and then this bloke suddenly combutsted. Hands up if you need Right Guard?"



"Take that, and that, and that! And when I've finished, it's your turn to do the washing up!"



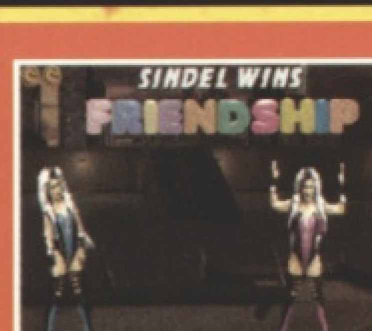




SONYA



KITANA

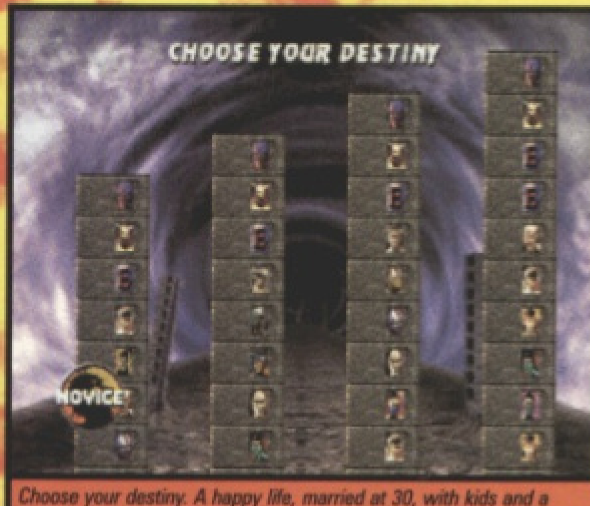


SINDEL



STRYKER





Choose your destiny. A happy life, married at 30, with kids and a small semi-detached in Bournemouth. Or the bloke below. Tough one.



BRING OUT THE ANIMAL IN YOU

The strangest of all the finishing move possibilities are definitely the Animalities. These involve the player morphing into an animal, and then finishing off the opponent in one form or another. To perform these moves, you and your enemy must have won a round each. Then, in the final round, you must get the 'Finish Him/Her' message up, and then perform a mercy (move over half a screen away, and hold run, press D, D, D, then release run). Now kill the person again and perform the desired move to set the animal free! Maybe. Anyway, not all of the Animalities are blood and guts moves. Reptile turns into a monkey that chases the opponent off the screen, and just when you think that Kitana has turned into a cute little rabbit, it then promptly devours you.















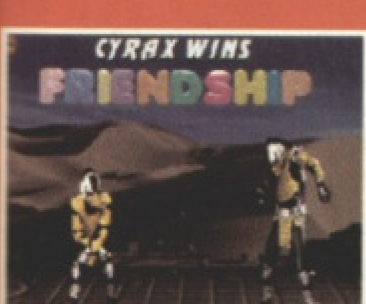
8 PLAYER KOMBAT

As well as being able to participate in the one on one side for this gore fest, there are a couple of other opportunities for you to indulge in a bit of multi-player fighting. There is a four character, two player, mode which is like the Endurance from the one player game, where you take control of two players, and one takes over from another when defeated. Then there is the the EIGHT (count 'em) player knockout style battle, where two people fight each other for one round, and the winner progresses further until only one warrior is left.





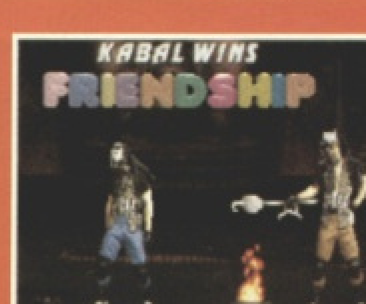
STRYKER



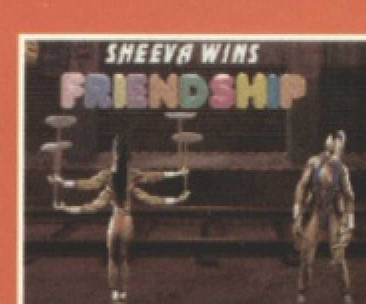
CYRAX



KUNG LAO



KABAL



SHEEVA









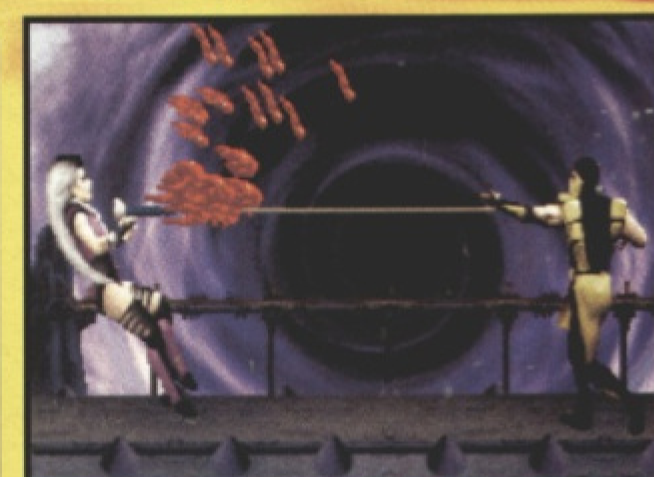


COMMENT



STEVE

What is it about a bit of blood and guts that makes you lot go mental? The sight of someone's head being ripped off seems to appeal to almost everyone, judging by the sales of the other games. And, having played this version, I can now safely say that I understand why. It's hard to put my finger on exactly, but there is something about this game that keeps on pulling me back for more. It's not so much that I'm a crazed psychotic killer who needs the sight of blood to keep going, it's just that I really like this game. The other versions, which I played for many hours, were a source of many chuckles, but the novelty of the finishing moves soon wore off. And although this happens in this game, there is far more here to keep the interest level high. The graphics are really well drawn, and coupled with the extremely atmospheric music (which I think is one of the best elements of the game) make for the suitably Gothic setting a game like this requires. And, fatalities aside, there is a lot more in the way of combos and other finishing moves to warrant purchase if any of the other versions are owned. I initially harboured doubts over the quality of the coin-op surviving the conversion process. I needn't have worried – this is more than just another round of Mortal Kombat. Another top class fighting game has arrived for the Saturn.



COMMENT



GUS

Steve's spot on when he contrasts this new UMK3 with the previous games. I've never been so much of a fan of Mortal Kombat over the Capcom games because the main fighting was subordinate to all the fancy finishing. Now every aspect of the game is of the highest quality, with a pace and variety to the player styles that is pretty breathtaking. There's an enormous amount of playing in Ultimate, even for the seasoned player, and the computer promotes a particularly vicious onslaught in one-player mode. Just a short period convinced me I'm going to have to practice like hell to match Steve. Suits me, sir.

GRAPHICS — 92

▲The backgrounds and the presentation of the game are all very good, and contain lots of details.

ANIMATION — 91

▲The characters' movements are fluid and smooth.
▼Some of the fatalities don't look as complete and 'real' as they could.

MUSIC — 94

▲One of the strongest suits of the game. Played through the right system, the atmosphere comes booming across.

EFFECTS — 89

▲Stacks of speech, linked with squelches, spurts and bone crunches, are all you could possibly hope for.

PLAYABILITY — 92

▲Easy to pick up, but tougher to get the combos and finishing moves down to a tee.

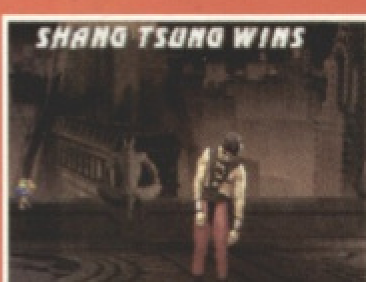
LASTABILITY — 93

▲Over 20 characters to master, with three different game styles and lots of difficulty settings.

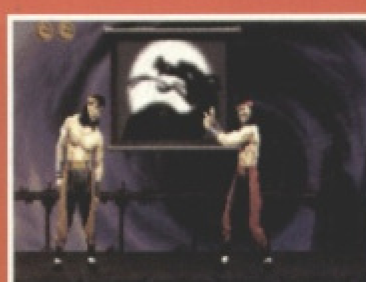
OVERALL

Easily the best Kombat of the series, and well worth owning even if the other versions are sitting on your game shelf. An excellent game.

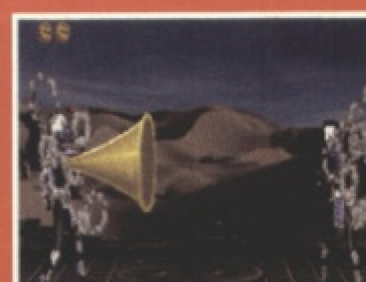
93



SHANG TSUNG



LIU KANG



SMOKE



BY: VIRGIN

RELEASE: MAY

PRICE: TBA

GAME TYPE: BEAT 'EM UP

1-2 PLAYERS

BREAK DOWN

ORIGINALITY

CHALLENGE

ACTION

STRATEGY

REFLEXES

OPTIONS

CONTROL: JOYPAD

GAME DIFFICULTY: MEDIUM

CONTINUES: UNLIMITED

SKILL LEVELS: 7

RESPONSIVENESS: BRILLIANT

ORIGIN

Vampire Hunter *is* Darkstalkers 2. Capcom adapted the original arcade board. This is an amazing reproduction of their CPS II coin-op.

GAME AIM

Defeat the other Darkstalkers, hoarding power until you can unleash some demonic attacks.

BEAT THIS

300,000



Every culture has its stories of the spirit world, every nation its spooky places. The dark forests of Eastern Europe were the birthplace of the vampire legends, which finally found famous form in Count Dracula. Switzerland was the more unlikely setting for Mary Shelley's man-made monster created by Victor Frankenstein.

In the east, stories of warriors rising from the grave as fearsome in life survived for centuries and contrasts with the fears of the Twentieth Century, when the science of ever more powerful and intelligent machines has spawned a genre of chilling fiction.

And Rent-a-Ghost. That's the British entrant for the Eurovision Spook Contest. You remember Mr Claypole, Miss Popov and the pantomime horse. Ghostly japes with hilarious consequences and all that. Clearly not to be ridiculed, as the Japanese have used it as an inspiration for the wacky nature of Vampire Hunter. Some of the characters carry sharp weapons that admittedly would not be acceptable on teatime TV, but this latest beat 'em up is all comic, not gruesome.

LEI LEI

CHILD GHOST



SWINGING BLADES (ES)



REFLECTIVE SHIELD (ES)



THE GRINDER

Despite the impressive set of blades on the little Chinese ghost girl, Lei Lei has a gentler style of fighting. Her special moves tend to leave her vulnerable to aggressive players. Very feminine in the way she throws sharp objects the underhand way.



SPROUTING BLADES (EX)



QUAKE WEIGHT (EX)

DONOVAN

VAMPIRE HUNTER



FIRE ELEMENTAL (ES)





ICE ELEMENTAL (ES)



STORM ELEMENTAL (ES)



TITAN STOMP (EX)

Donovan, in his role as hunter of evil spirits, has three good elemental apparitions to summon upon, and a vast Titan when Donovan has amassed enough energy. Donovan carries the massive sword of the Vampire Hunter.

IT'S ALL TOO GHASTLY

Finally, we reveal all twelve Darkstalkers characters and their unlikely fighting disciplines. Look out for attacks marked 'ES' which can be souped up by using two or more punch/kick buttons, utilising your special energy bar. 'EX' are devastatingly impressive 'finishing' moves.

GALLON

WEREWOLF



HOUNDS OF HELL (EX)



Gallon captures the heart like no other character in the game. He's energetic, easy to get to grips with, and has the same vigorous, bestial style of Capcom characters from Streetfighter's Blanka to X-Men's Wolverine. The core of his special attacks are his multi-directional dashing moves. Becoming over-reliant on these, however, makes for dull matches.



FLASHING TOE UPPERCUT (ES)



ROLLING THROW (ES)



FIRE DRAGON (EX)



HOWLING DASH (ES)

DEMITRI

VAMPIRE



SPINNING WINGS (ES)



HELLFIRE BALL (ES)

The game's most debonair character, very quick on his feet and easily able to disorientate opponents by vanishing in a puff of smoke. Let us not forget that, despite his handsome bearing, he is a minion of The Beast. He also possesses the one 'classic' Capcom fireball attack.





DRIVING STAKE (ES)



TOUCH OF DEATH (EX)



BATS OUT OF HELL (EX)



MORRIGAN

SUCCUBUS



ENERGY BOLT (ES)

Succubus is an attractive feminine demon who steals souls with her charm. Morrigan is slight and shapely and pretty fast on her feet. She has the honour of a distinctly Dragon Punch move, and a great drop throw. This partly makes up for her bizarre 'finishing' moves which are hardly that. In two of them, she creates a mirror-image of herself to join in the attack, but neither will work if the opponent is blocking, so often her EX moves fail to come off.



PLUMMET THROW (ES)



ROCKET ATTACK (EX)





DEMON PUNCH (ES)



MIRROR ATTACK (EX)



VICTOR

MANMADE MONSTER



POWER CLOTHESLINE (ES)



FIST DASH (ES)

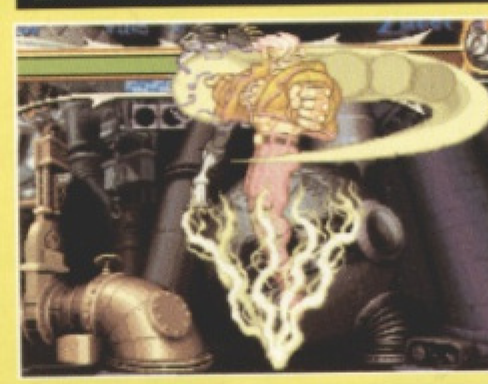


SMASH THROW



EARTHING CHARGE (EX)

The Victor of Vampire Hunter is more of a cuddly lovable giant than the creepy creature of Shelley's novel. He is pretty lumbering next to the frisky Gallon or Felicia. Victor's strength doesn't come from his specials (which include a very tricky close-range throw). Instead, you're able to charge his normal punches and kicks by holding onto the buttons longer, stimulating an electric charge.



SHOCKER LARIAT (EX)

ZABEL

FASHION ZOMBIE



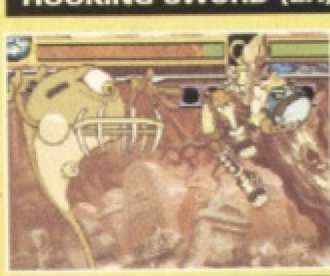
HOOKING SWORD (EX)



GOUGING THROW (ES)







SLAM DUNK (EX)



SHOCKER TOP (EX)



JACK ATTACK (ES)

Zabel has the same lust for flesh as any Romero zombie, but he's slightly zippier than any of that lot. His special moves are unspectacular but Zabel is good for those who like fast, uncomplicated characters who can string together combos of ordinary moves. His EX specials are easy to pull off and, though they rarely bring the action to a conclusion, do a fair chunk of damage.

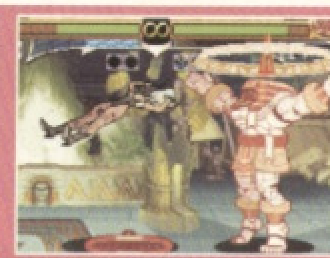
ANAKARIS

EGYPTIAN MUMMY

The slowest monster imaginable becomes the slowest character feasible. Anakaris' responses are so delayed that every move must be timed perfectly. Thankfully, he's a good defensive character, and has some amusing moves worth perfecting, including an airborne cloud of gas reducing foes to cuddly toy-size! These include three bizarre specials, two of which take quite a but of button-pressing to pull off.



BURIAL ATTACK (EX)



PORTAL ATTACK (EX)





SARCOPHAGUS DROP (ES)



INFANTILE BREATH (ES)



BANDAGE GRAB (ES)

FELICIA

FELINE SPIRIT



SCRATCH TWIST (ES)



FELINE FRENZY (EX)



ROLL AND POUNCE (ES)





DUST SCRATCHER (ES)

Mischievous Felicia, a joy to play. Not only one of the most responsive characters, but graced with some of the best moves. She has a range of jolly, bouncy attacks, including a full screen roll which can develop into a leaping punch combo. Vary this with her spinning pole scratcher throw move and two fun finishers, one of which brings two playmates on screen to scratch the opposition to death.



PLAYMATES ATTACK (EX)

BISHAMON

SAMURAI SPIRIT

In our humble view the most vicious Darkstalker, Bishamon's star turn is his sword moves. He is able to throw this like a dagger and then collect by running through his opponent. The powered-up version of this displays a ritual suicide! Otherwise, Bishamon has his own minion-spirits that will restrain opponents for a short time and a couple of ghostly finishing moves.



HINDERING SPIRITS (ES)



UPWARD SLASH (ES)



GHOST LEGIONS (EX)



SUICIDAL SWORD (ES)



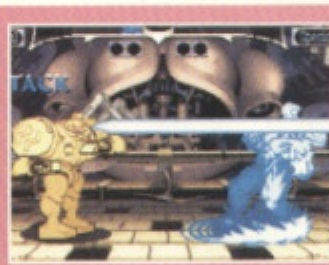


CRUSHING HAND (EX)

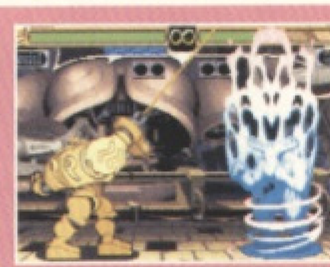
PHOBOS

TERROR ROBOT

Phobos, like X-Men's Sentinel, is a heavy-duty character. His throwing moves are bone-crunchingly severe, and his missile attacks rock the playfield. He also has the benefit of laser specials that cover all areas of the screen, including the air. His weaknesses are a delay in attacks being performed and a couple of pretty weak EX moves.

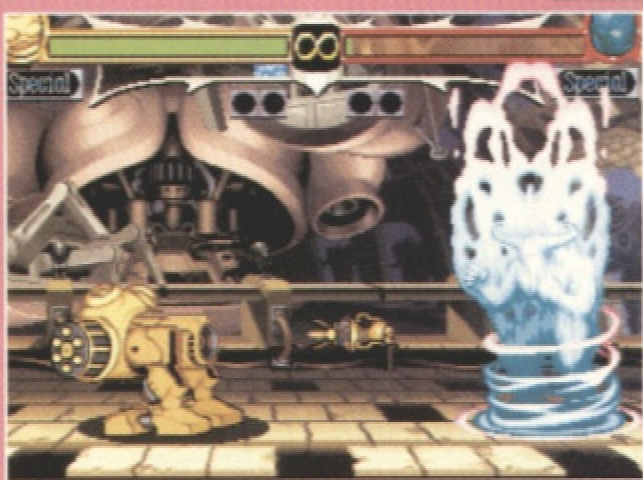


ICE LASER (ES)

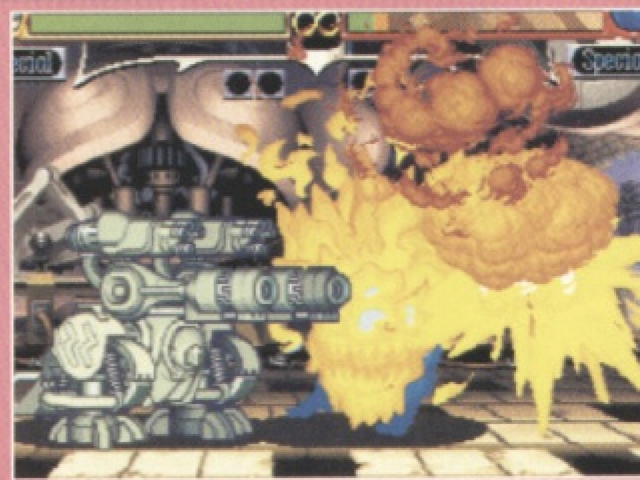


AIMING LASER (ES)





LOW LEVEL BAZOOKA (ES)



ARTILLERY BARRAGE (EX)



MAGNET TOSS (ES)

AULBATH

LAGOON CREATURE



RIPPLE RAY (ES)



TIDAL WAVE (EX)

Aulbath is a suitably slippery customer, and makes it difficult to come close with some superb close-range attacks, including a ripple ray and a stunning poison gas attack. His throwing attacks are not bad, but his most photogenic attack is a tidal wave finisher that is as effective as it looks. Neither of his other two EX moves come close.



GAS ATTACK (ES)



WATER JET LEAP (ES)



BUBBLE TOMB (EX)



PYRON

FIRE ELEMENTAL

The fearsome boss at the end of Darkstalkers is now a selectable character. Pyron looks fantastic, with animated whispers of flame rising from his body. His attacks are useful, but mostly lacklustre to watch. He is the sole character with a measly one EX move, though this is a wonder of abstract art, forming in the air.





CATHERINE WHEEL (ES)



FIRE TOP (ES)



FIREBALL (ES)



SPHERE THROW



ENERGY FIELD (EX)



WALL OF ICE (ES)

SASQUATCH

ABOMINABLE SNOWMAN

Ice, as you might expect, forms the backbone of his arsenal, with a slow-moving snowball easiest to employ and a nasty wall of icicles quick to come into place. More fun is had using the two big foot moves and the gobbling throw. Both of Sasquatch's finishing moves are worth seeing, especially the comic thin-ice, which is a trap set for opponents.



GOBBLE THROW (ES)





SNOW BALLS (ES)



ICE BEAM (EX)



THIN ICE TRAP (EX)

COMMENT



GUS

Capcom are the unchallenged exponents of the 2-D beat 'em up, and the Saturn is the most proficient machine on which to recreate their arcade games. Vampire Hunter is the supreme demonstration of this, with a conversion of such utter grace, anyone into combat games should consider it a must-have. It's true that we've raved about X-Men and Streetfighter in turn, but Vampire Hunter strikes a good middle ground between the two. There's much more in it than X-Men — more specials, and the potential to charge these into extra specials, more characters and a greater range of backgrounds and fighting styles. It's also less 'wham-bam' than X-Men. On the other side, it's easier to grasp than Streetfighter, with lots of comic touches and some outrageous animations. In terms of sound and graphics it's impeccable, indeed sets new standards. It's my personal favourite of the Capcom three. Congratulations to Virgin for signing it.

COMMENT



STEVE

The confrontations that Streetfighter Alpha engendered last month are cropping up again here. Whereas I loved Streetfighter, but Marcus didn't, Gus loves this and I don't. Don't get me wrong here – I have spent quite a bit of my spare time playing this and I'll agree that it is definitely worthy of 'mega game' status. But I didn't derive as much satisfaction from this as Alpha. In fact, the gameplay seemed a little shallow to me. Some of the moves are tough to pull off, but there are so many to incorporate it doesn't matter quite as much. But one thing that does appeal to me greatly is the humour in this game – especially Zabel's slam dunk move. This is definitely a new angle for Capcom to take with their fighting games and, from the looks of this, a very successful one. And if you compare it to the other big fighting game reviewed this issue, King of the Fighters, it frankly dumps all over that. It just goes to show that Capcom are indeed masters of the genre.

GRAPHICS 95

▲Gorgeous settings and intricate character design, with some of the most amazing move ideas ever.

ANIMATION 93

▲The loss of frames from the arcade game is barely noticeable. The range of animation is huge.

MUSIC 90

▲Decidedly unhip, even easy-listening style orchestrations — but suited to the game's comic appeal.

EFFECTS 91

▲The quality of the thumping effects is best appreciated on a TV with a good bass. Even the backdrops provide a source for sound effects.

PLAYABILITY 94

▲Superlative, with so many speed and difficulty settings. Brilliant range of character control.

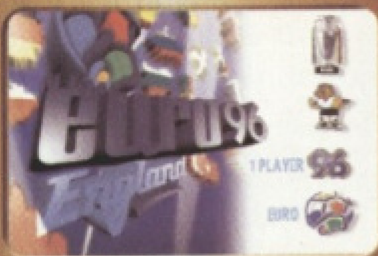
LASTABILITY 92

▲An undeniable and instant classic, with huge scope for refining your gameplay.

OVERALL

As good as any other beat 'em up, Vampire Hunter is an awesome coin-op conversion.

94



BY SEGA

RELEASE JUNE

PRICE £44.99

GAME TYPE FOOTBALL

BREAK DOWN

1-4 PLAYERS

ORIGINALITY

CHALLENGE

ACTION

STRATEGY

REFLEXES

OPTIONS

CONTROL JOYPAD

GAME DIFFICULTY AVERAGE

CONTINUES SAVE GAME

SKILL LEVELS 1

RESPONSIVENESS GOOD

ORIGIN

Originates from PC and Playstation Actua Soccer, and is in fact Actua 2, with all the faults from those versions having been removed.

GAME AIM

Compete in a detailed, and well researched, simulation of the European Championships.

BEAT THIS

WIN WITH HOLLAND

Here's a guide to the average life of a footballer. He'll start young, usually about 8 or 9, and join a local team formed by his best mate's dad who thinks his offspring is the next Maradonna. This team will have moderate success, before they all get bored with each other and split up. Then he'll join the school team and kid himself that they can't do without him. Then, when he keeps getting left out, he'll get his dad to complain to the PE teacher.

After a few years out, he'll have become so overweight that he'll have to do some sort of sport on the orders of his irate dad. At this point, our budding Lineker has two choices – he can heed his father's warnings, star with a non-league side and have a brief trial with a pro club before seriously discovering alcohol and losing track of everything. Or, he can discover alcohol, and be forced to play out what-could-have-been through games like Euro '96. Which, tear-jerkingly, brings us to...



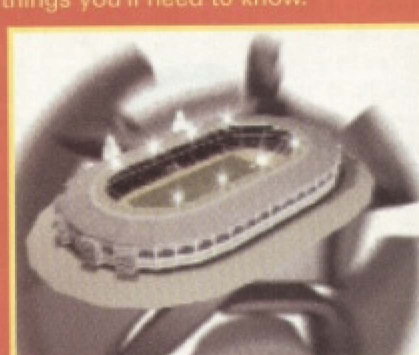




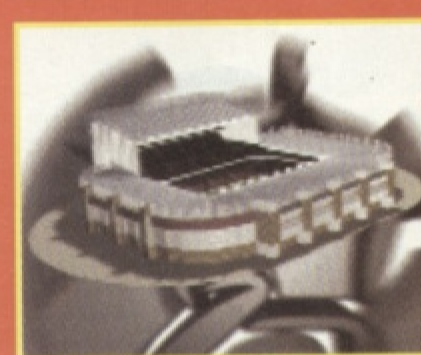


SUNDAY MORNING PARK FIELD

In keeping with the level of realism maintained thoughout, the game has all of the 8 stadiums featured in the original championships for your playing pleasure. For those of you not quite familiar with the domestic football scene, here are the things you'll need to know.



WEMBLEY
Situated: LONDON
Home To: ENGLAND
Euro Teams visiting: HOLLAND, SCOTLAND, SWITZERLAND.



OLD TRAFFORD
Situated: MANCHESTER
Home To: MANCHESTER UNTIED
Euro Teams visiting: GERMANY, CZECH REP, ITALY, RUSSIA.



ANFIELD
Situated: LIVERPOOL
Home To: LIVERPOOL
Euro Teams visiting: CZECH REP, ITALY, RUSSIA.

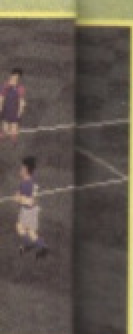


STONE ME, IT'S BARRY DAVIES

Yes, as mentioned before, the one and only Barry Davies is the man behind the voice of this footballing treat and, frankly, the programmers have done a far better job with this commentary than Motty's repetitive FIFA debacle. The range of phrases and sayings that Mr Davies comes up with makes for a veritable cornucopia of commentary classics. When an audacious shot is attempted, he'll respond with cutting remarks like "Even the linesman had to move out of the way of that one!" If one of your passes is easily intercepted by an opponent, he bites back with "Well, he was on the next page he read that so early!" Cheeky git.



"Choo Choo Choo, C'mon and do the conga." Or maybe..."Everybody's doin' a brand new dance now. C'mon baby, do the locomotion." Maybe.



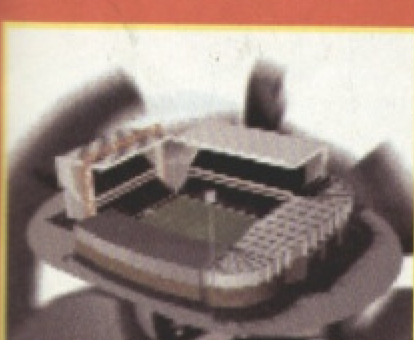


I think I'll just lay down here for a while and watch the amazing levitating player as he hovers above the ball. "Oi, ref. D'you fancy taking a walk to the shops for us?"

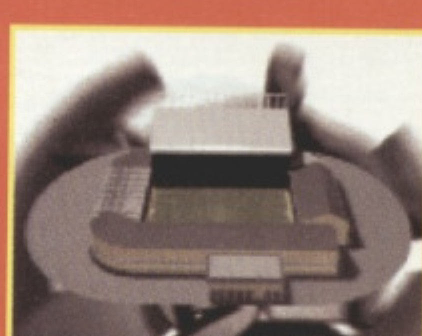




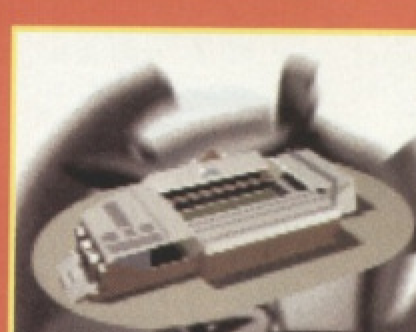
HILLSBROUGH
Situated: SHEFFIELD
Home To: SHEFFIELD WEDNESDAY
Euro Teams visiting: DENMARK, PORTUGAL, CROATIA, TURKEY.



CITY GROUND
Situated: NOTTINGHAM
Home To: NOTTS FOREST
Euro Teams visiting: PORTUGAL, TURKEY, CROATIA.



ELLAND ROAD
Situated: LEEDS
Home To: LEEDS UNITED
Euro Teams visiting: SPAIN, BULGARIA, ROMANIA, FRANCE.



VILLA PARK
Situated: BIRMINGHAM
Home To: ASTON VILLA
Euro Teams visiting: HOLLAND, SCOTLAND, SWITZERLAND.

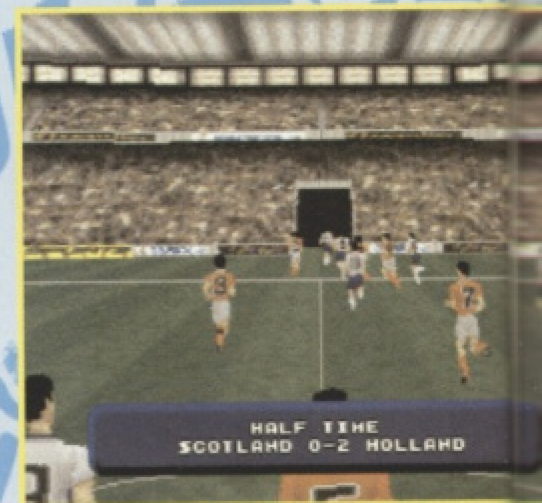


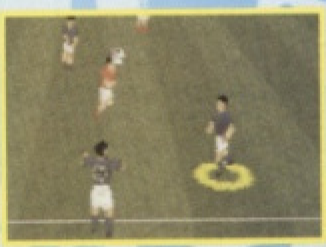
ST JAMES' PARK
Situated: NEWCASTLE
Home To: NEWCASTLE UNITED
Euro Teams visiting: BULGARIA, ROMANIA, FRANCE.

PICK ME A WINNER

The teams that are in the game are all replicas of their real life counterparts. And it's not just the first eleven that are real – all the squads can be selected and juggled about with until you find your perfect formation. The rosters for the teams are more or less going to be the final squads who go with the teams (we say more or less because, despite our footballing knowledge, we cannot vouch for the Croatian team, as there may have been a few last minute additions). So if you are outraged that Ferdinand is not in the starting line up, then don't worry because it's all changeable.















Is it a bird? Is it a plane? No, it's one of the players Eric Cantona has just kicked out of the Stadium in Manchester. Oi! Froggy! NO!





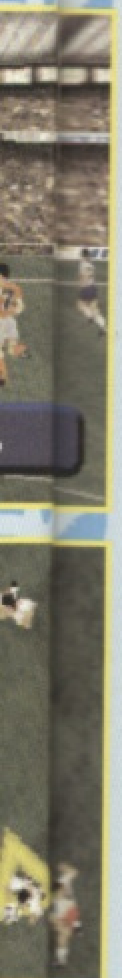






AND FOR VIEWERS IN GERMANY...

Just to add a little more for our fellow European friends, the programmers not only enlisted Barry Davies to commentate on the English version, they have also grabbed the top commentators from around the EC to lend their talents to the exported copies of the game. It still remains to be seen if the hour long chants of Goooooooaaaaaallllll (you get the idea) will be included.

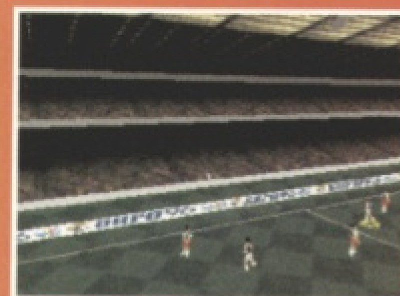


DOWN FROM ABOVE

As we have now come to expect from these new-fangled 'virtual' games, there are untold amounts of views for you to play under. By using the L and R buttons during the game, the view will switch to any one of 6 perspectives. The thing with this game is that it can be easier to see what is approaching by quickly switching the view to a more isometric, or distant view. This will allow you to avoid oncoming slide tackles, and see if any of your teammates are in better goal-scoring positions.







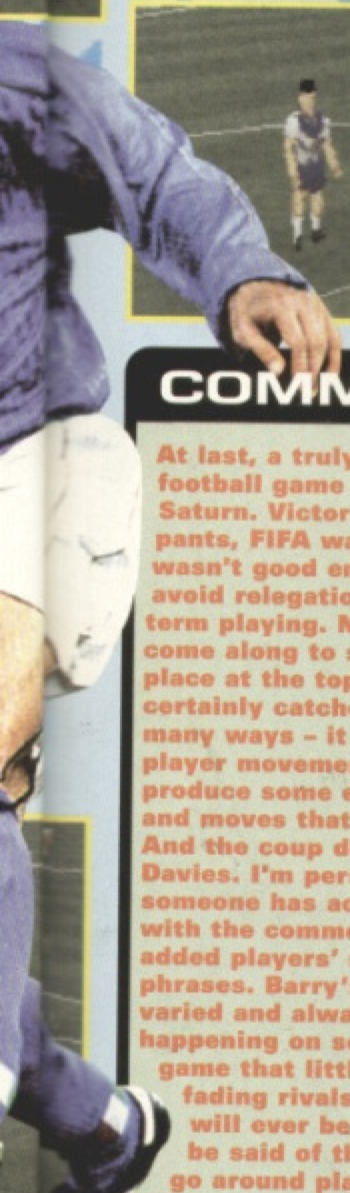








Go on my son! He's standing in front of the goal, with no defenders to beat and the goalkeeper is helplessly stranded. Even a granny with no sense of vision and all the co-ordination of a drunken donkey could score.



COMMENT



STEVE

At last, a truly decent football game on the Saturn. Victory Goal was pants, FIFA was good, but wasn't good enough to avoid relegation after long-term playing. Now this has come along to secure a place at the top. This certainly catches the eye in many ways – it has realistic player movements and attributes, and can produce some excellent-looking moments and moves that are strung together nicely. And the coup de gras is undoubtedly Barry Davies. I'm personally glad to see that someone has actually spent a bit of time with the commentary, and not simply added players' names to a couple of stock phrases. Barry's comments are always varied and always relevant to what is happening on screen, thus making the game that little bit more special than its fading rivals. However, no football game will ever be perfect, and the same can be said of this. It's a little too easy to go around players, and the camera sometimes struggles to keep up with the play, but these are overlooked when you really get into the game. A top footy sim, and make no mistake about it.

COMMENT



GUS

Maybe we were a bit easy on FIFA back in January. But then we were desperate for a half-decent footy game. Gremlin have now served up something with a bit more class. It's a smooth, fast, exciting to watch and exciting to play rendition of the beautiful game, and made special in no small measure by the occasion of Euro '96, which has been covered by good profiles on the players and national teams. There are some gameplay weaknesses — the ability to hold onto the ball from end to end, and the over-enthusiastic cameraman. Despite that, I haven't had so much fun since Archie Gemmell scored for Scotland against Holland in 1978.

GRAPHICS — 89

▲Good presentaion, and the use of all the official logos has been milked to the limit.
▼Some of the stadiums look a bit ropey.

ANIMATION — 90

▲Players chest, head and kick the ball with ultimate realism.

MUSIC — 91

▲A few Barry Davies phrases have been mixed in with some tunes to a suitable effect. The main game tunes are also good.

EFFECTS — 93

▲Barry Davies. Awesome.
▼The crowd are sometimes samey, their cheers occasionally unrealistic-sounding.

PLAYABILITY — 90

▲Really grabs you once you've got around the initial control problems, and there are plenty of teams to play as.

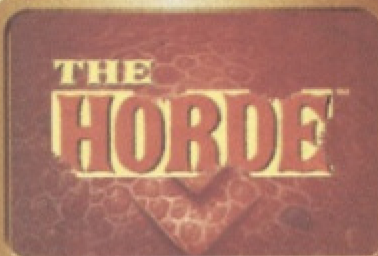
LASTABILITY — 91

▲In multi-player mode, you'll be playing for ages.
▼Still only 1 skill level.

OVERALL — 91

Easily the best Saturn football game so far, and the next game for all of you who are bored with, or didn't like, FIFA.

THE HORDE



BY: BMG

RELEASE: MAY

PRICE: £44.99

GAME TYPE: ADVENTURE

BREAK DOWN

1 PLAYERS

ORIGINALITY

CHALLENGE

ACTION

STRATEGY

REFLEXES

OPTIONS

CONTROL
JOYPAD

GAME DIFFICULTY
HARD

CONTINUES
SAVE GAME

SKILL LEVELS
1

RESPONSIVENESS
CLUMSY

ORIGIN

It's programmed by kings of the 3DO, Crystal Dynamics, who initially produced this game for the system.

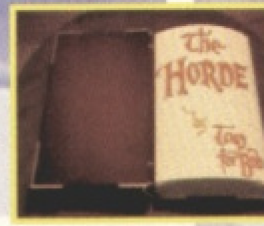
GAME AIM

Set up a thriving community, earn some cash, and protect your little village from the attacks of the Horde.

BEAT THIS

GET TO 3RD YEAR

Stereotypical peasants, an evil sheriff and a gullible king. The king spoils himself by going through life eating feasts, and ordering people about, while the sheriff makes it his duty to order the king about. If this isn't the perfect opportunity for us to once again mock the appalling acting of hammy old thespians (gleefully noting the 'uncanny' resemblances to members of the MM team) we don't know what is.



You are the king's servant, and are serving up some grub at a big nosh up held in the curiously pokey banqueting hall. Amidst all the hilarity, you're the only person to realise that the king is choking on his food. Being the decent bloke that you are, you rush to his aid and make him spit out the contents of his clogged throat. The evil sheriff, however, is not best pleased at your heroism and promptly tries to throw you in the slammer. The king is having none of this though, and pulls you back, exclaiming you're a national hero for saving his life. He knights you there and then. Your first task as a knight of the realm is to guard the village and protect it from 'the Horde'. Ho hum.

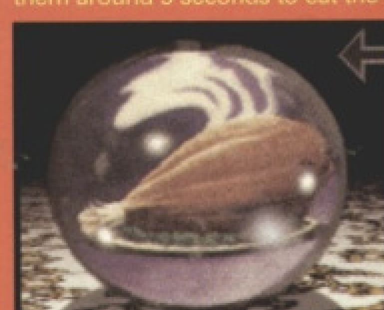


YE OLDE SHOPPE

If you manage to stay in credit with the tax man, and keep yourself and the community alive, you'll be rewarded with a trip to Le Shoppe (The mediaeval version of WH Smith). Numerous items are available to purchase at this first shop, all of which will aid you in one form or another.

HAUNCH SECRET RECIPE

It costs 50 crowns to buy, and only 5 to use, a piece of disease-ridden, mad cow-infested meat. It attracts the Horde, taking their concentration away from the town, giving you a chance to collar them. It only takes them around 5 seconds to eat the stuff, so be quick.





RING OF TELEPORTATION

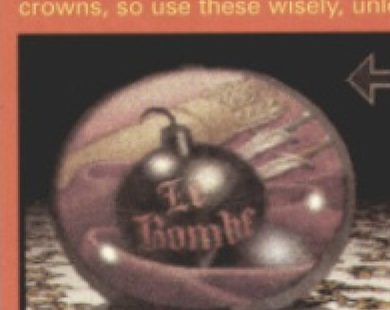
Speaks for itself, this. You know the Star Trek Transporter Room? Well this is the same thing, only you wear it on your finger. Beameth me up ye olde Scottie. Most expensive item at 300 gold crowns.

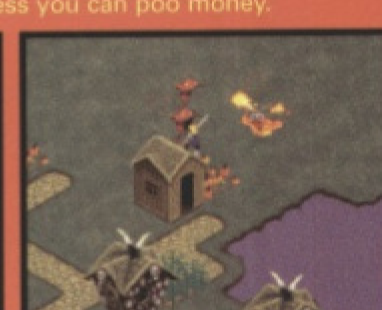




LE BOMBE

Apparently, this is the latest device from overseas, and it packs a hefty punch. This one weighs in at an overdraft-bulging 250 gold crowns, so use these wisely, unless you can poo money.

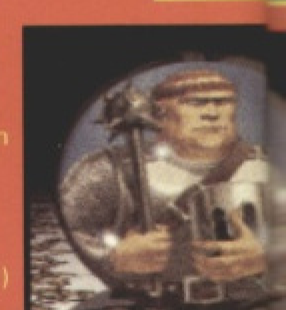




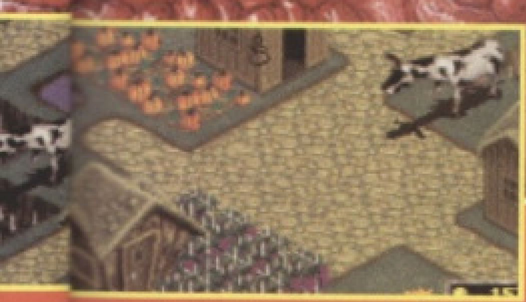


KNIGHT CONTRACT

This is more like it. Hire a few rock 'ard bodyguards who duff the crap out of any Hordlings who happen to get in your way. These blokes mean business, so they are definitely worth getting for a measly (!) 250 big ones.





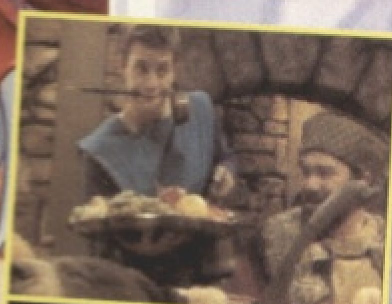


FRENCH CROPS

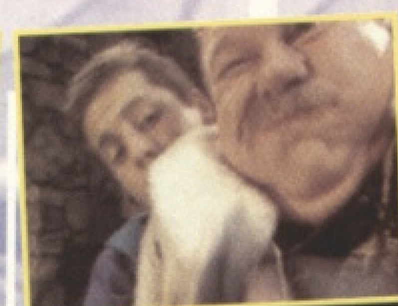
Of course, there are other ways to make some cash, and the most profitable of those is by looking after your crops. They expand and grow of their own accord, meaning that all you have to do is tend to them with a bit of loving care. The most effective way of doing this is to build spikes around them, but this does tend to waste a bit of money.



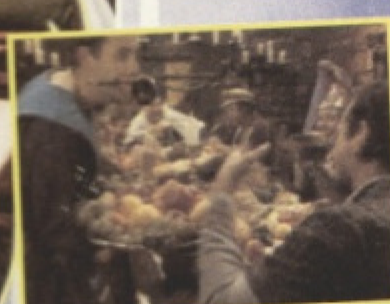
For every patch of field that you manage to keep secure there is a 20 crown reward. The only bummer to this is that the Hordlings only have to walk over a bit of crop to destroy it.



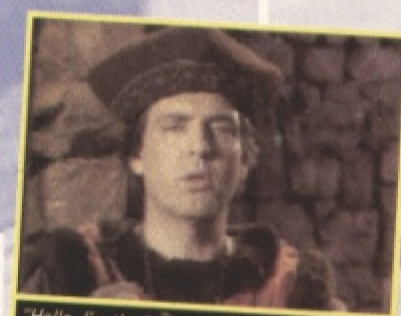
"Look I can hold a sword in my gob and balance a bowl of fruit at the same time!"



Who ate all the pies? Who ate all the pies? You fat git! You fat git! You ate all the pies!

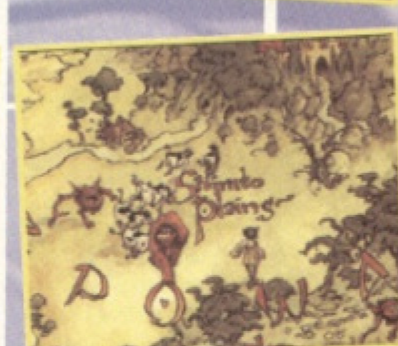


"Care for a waffer-thin mint sir?" "No I'm stuffed!" "But sir, it is only waffer-thin."



"Hello, I'm the infamous Tea Cosy Man! Mess with me, and I'll pour you a cuppa."



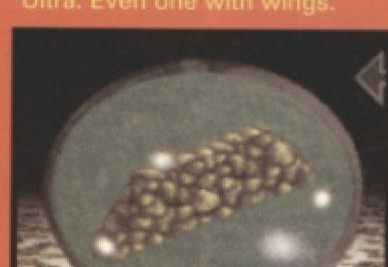


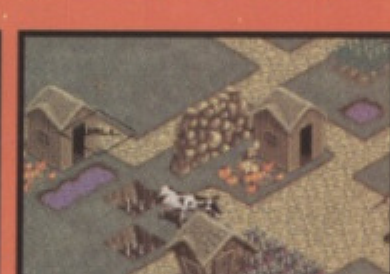
MASONIC SECRETS

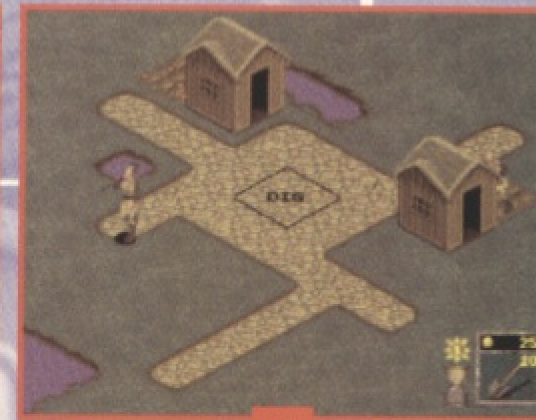
The fences may be pretty good, but they don't keep out the Hordlings for long enough, so stop all the messing about and slap in a proper brick wall for more protection than an Always Ultra. Even one with wings.



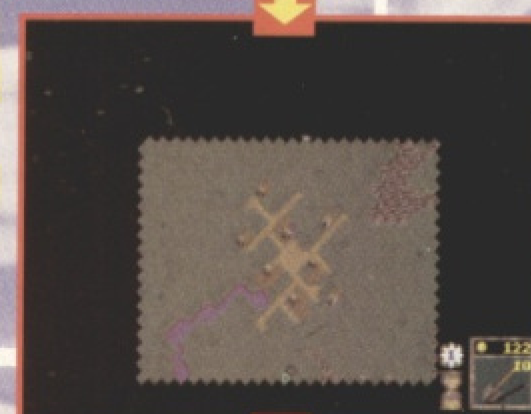










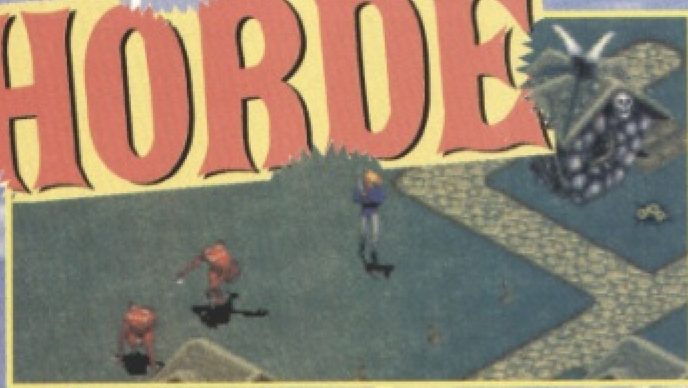






Your village is puny to start with, but the further into the year you go, and the further down our sequence, the bigger the area to build in becomes, and the more trees and rivers get in your way. Survive three years, to move to other areas.

THE HORDE







GARDENERS' QUESTION TIME

If green fingers and getting dirt under your nails is your type of thing then this game might be for you. You begin with 25 gold crowns and a bunch of available options. Each of these costs money though, so they have to used accordingly.



DIG

For every grown tree you dig up, you get five crowns for your troubles. You can also dig up small patches of water, and any old fences and small obstacles that may be getting in your way. Be warned however, as all the non money-spinning items you dig up will cost you 10 gold crowns.



SPIKES

Of all the things you start with, this is the best for protecting the houses and so forth. Placing some of these around any cows or buildings will disintegrate any Hordlings foolish enough to step on them. They do disappear once trodden on, however, and they'll set you back 10 crowns.



COWS

These are a sound investment, as for every Horde invasion you manage to survive, 25 crowns will head your way. It's best to put these in the centre of the village or where they are less likely to succumb to any attack. They are a costly loss if killed early on.



FENCE

Quite cheap at 5 crowns per length, but you get what you pay for, and what you get here is crap. They manage to delay the advancing Horde for all of 3 seconds before they break through and attack anything in their way. Mainly for aesthetic pleasure.



TREES

These are the main source of income when you first start, so should be treated with due care and attention. To plant a tree only costs a single crown, yet if you dig up a fully grown tree you'll acquire 5 for your troubles. The more you can plant, obviously the more cash you can make.



CALL HORDE

This is most used when you've spent all your hard-earned and are just waiting for the Horde to arrive. If this is the case, select this, and the rest of the timer will instantly disappear and the Arrrroooo! will signal the beginning of an invasion. This costs nothing, as it could be potentially harmful to you.





"Why Sire, that's a jolly large sword you're poking at me there!" "All the better to fell you with my son."

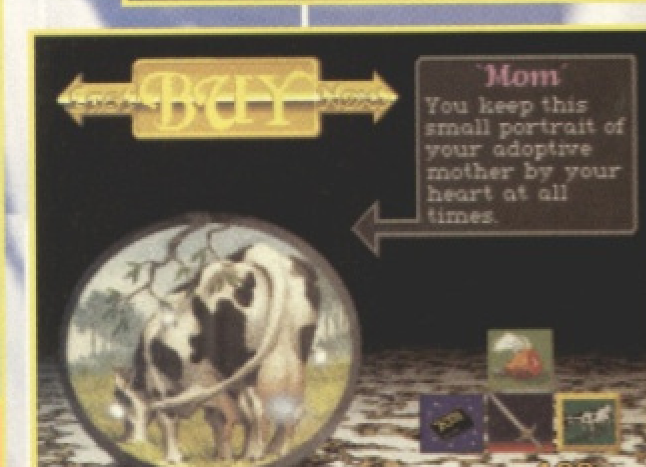




To disturb the mothers meeting take one sword, and one human. Now approach slowly, and in a cunning attack, take the biggest, most almighty swipe you could possibly muster..



And BOOM! More pieces of mashed tomato than a Linda McCartney bake for two minutes and serve with a slice of cucumber and a sprig of parsley microwave meal. Maybe.





Let's look at the evidence. A cobblers patio, an outside toilet door, one flower patch and a pathetic fish pond. So who lives in a house like this? David, it's over to you.



And I am thee Spirit of thee Lumberjacks. If I wish to chop down thee trees to make thyself some casheth a think that thy will. You are a plebeth of the higheth degree. Sod offeth.



COMMENT

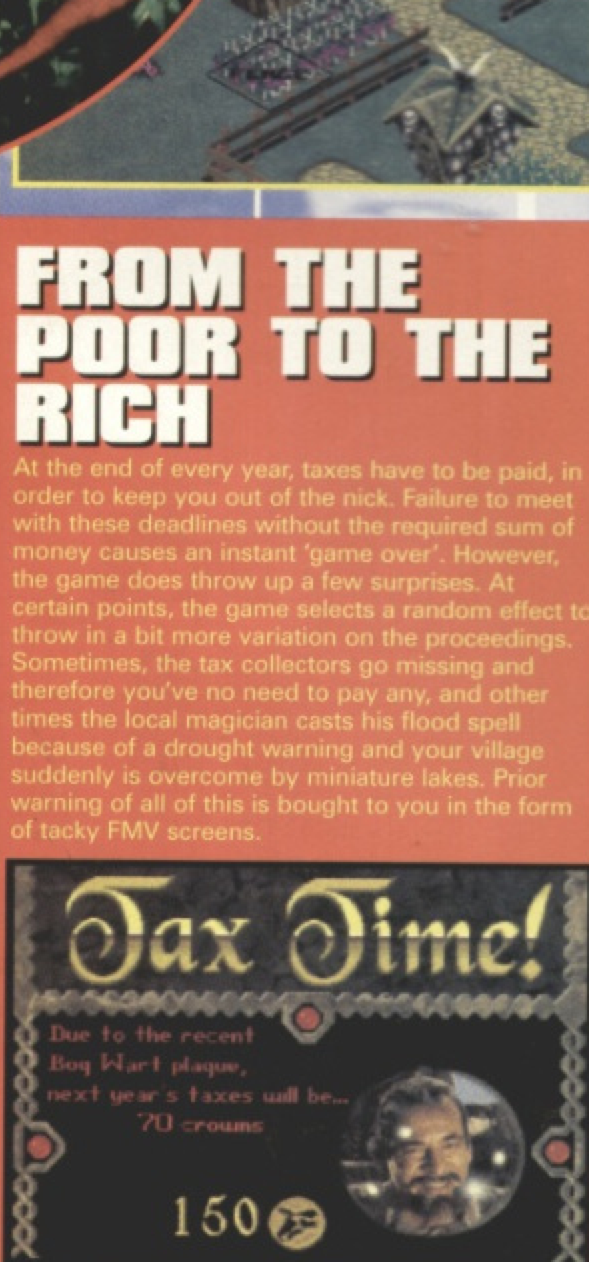


STEVE

Strange old bird this. On the one side, there is a pretty in depth game, which, when you know exactly what you're meant to be doing, can be pretty addictive. The enticement of buying all the mod cons to progress further works well, and the bodyguards are particularly funny if you can get them to work in the right places. But The Horde's strongest feature for me is the depth. Everyone who has been bothered to play this for longer than the standard 20 minutes-this-is-crap-turn-it-off period will find that there is a good game underneath here trying to get out. The initial problem is working out what you are supposed to be doing. It's not so much that the controls are the problem, it's more to do with the actual planning and the building of the town. I didn't realise at first that, like the cows and the crops, the trees give you money. But, once the initial year is negotiated, the rest of the game becomes quite compelling. I can't see everyone going for this, and it's definitely not a classic game, but I feel it is well worth a look if you have the patience.

FROM THE POOR TO THE RICH

At the end of every year, taxes have to be paid, in order to keep you out of the nick. Failure to meet with these deadlines without the required sum of money causes an instant 'game over'. However, the game does throw up a few surprises. At certain points, the game selects a random effect to throw in a bit more variation on the proceedings. Sometimes, the tax collectors go missing and therefore you've no need to pay any, and other times the local magician casts his flood spell because of a drought warning and your village suddenly is overcome by miniature lakes. Prior warning of all of this is bought to you in the form of tacky FMV screens.



COMMENT



GUS

The Horde is Crystal Dynamics best game of the last couple of years, and works far better on Saturn than Solar Eclipse or Gex. The game's strengths are its originality and depth. The mixture of short action sequences and pretty involved strategic planning periods make it play like a Sim City with balls. The whole affair centres round money, rather than lives, and the player feels totally free to make spending decisions to add another couple of crown to his coffers. The interaction between the two distinct gameplay sections is neat — as a player gets more proficient at killing Horde, he can spend less on defences. To spice up what can ultimately become a bit repetitive, there's all manner of random occurences, brought to you by a newsreader, which force you to be less complacent. The game's greeny appearance speaks for itself, but The Horde is far more attractive than its visuals let on.

GRAPHICS — 88

▲They may look fairly basic at first, but the village is actually quite detailed.
▼Didn't need the crappy FMV really.

ANIMATION — 89

▲The men, cows and Hordlings are all surprisingly well done, and actually look like time and effort has been spent on them.

MUSIC — 79

▼One in-game banjo ditty, and it's extremely annoying. Not at all good.

EFFECTS — 80

▲The Horde make amusing noises.
▼Shame the Horde horn isn't more than Arrrrooooo.

PLAYABILITY — 85

▲Give it time, and you'll be reaping the benefits.
▼Don't give it time, and you'll unwisely discard it.

LASTABILITY — 88

▲It's a big ol' game, and make no bones about it.

OVERALL

Not as instantly appealing as we'd like, and the goldfish among you will hate it. However, just scratch away the surface...

86



BY GAME ARTS

RELEASE OUT NOW (IMPORT)

PRICE IMPORT (£70)

GAME TYPE SHOOT 'EM UP

BREAKDOWN

1 PLAYERS

ORIGINALITY

CHALLENGE

ACTION

STRATEGY

REFLEXES

OPTIONS

CONTROL
JOYPAD

GAME DIFFICULTY
HARD

CONTINUES
INFINITE

SKILL LEVELS
3

RESPONSIVENESS
EXCELLENT

ORIGIN

Game Arts made one of the few half-decent Mega CD games – Silpheed. Now they've moved onto Saturn.

GAME AIM

Taking control of a super-powered Manga-esque killing machine, you must destroy other mechanical menaces in a blasting frenzy.

BEAT THIS

COMPLETE 4 MISSIONS

The Japanese have drawn heavily from robot imagery for such classic Manga/Anime stories as Guyver, Bubblegum Crisis and Appleseed. So it seems pretty strange that it has taken so long for any games of this style to appear on the Sega format (no doubt some gaming anorak out there will write in to point out otherwise, but who cares). However, with the arrival of Gungriffon, the ultra high-tech, heaving slabs of machinery finally make it onto the Saturn, in a blaze of WD 40 and Ronseal No Rust Metal Protector. Remember, "It does exactly what it says on the tin."

Gungriffon lets you take the controls of the aforementioned robot geezers, as you are thrust into the all-out warfare of a futuristic Eurasian Conflict. It's mass destruction ahoy, with your prime objective being to blow the crap out of everything bearing the slightest resemblance to an enemy fighter. Of course, being the ultimate in fighting technology, you have an impressive range of moves and weapons available to you, giving you the all-important edge over the other 'griffons in the battle field. Except for the fact that there are loads of other identical robots desperate to kill you. Now, where's that Ronseal...?

SHOOT TO KILL

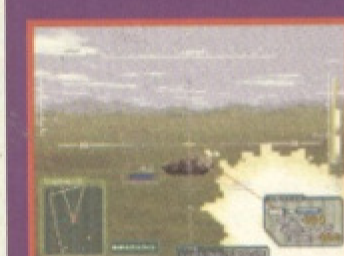
This is Motherbase to Gungriffon. Do you read, over? Stand by for weapons analysis and safety check. Over.

GUN



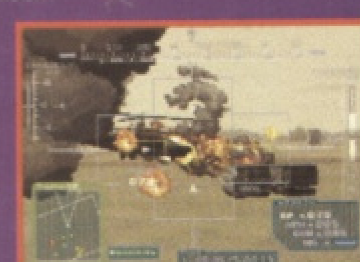
This is the standard weapon that is automatically selected when you start. It kills the tanks with one hit, and other griffons and helicopters with a couple of shots. Supplies of these are pretty limited, so use them wisely.

MACHINE GUN



Seeing as all your other weapons are limited, this one had to be infinite, but it does overheat when used excessively, demanding a cooling-off period. The overheating is shown by a small energy bar at the bottom of the screen.

RPG



Shining Force and Landstalker make a surprise appearance! This is a lie. In this case RPG stands for rocket propelled grenades, and these are pretty hot stuff. 6 or 7 grenades launched at once mean total carnage.

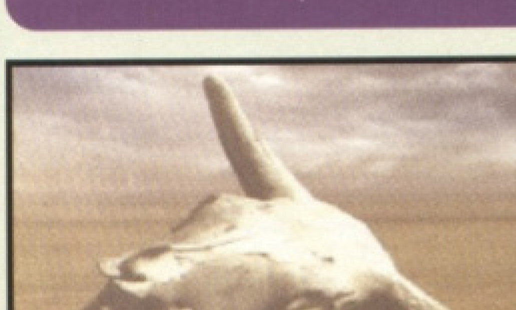
ATM

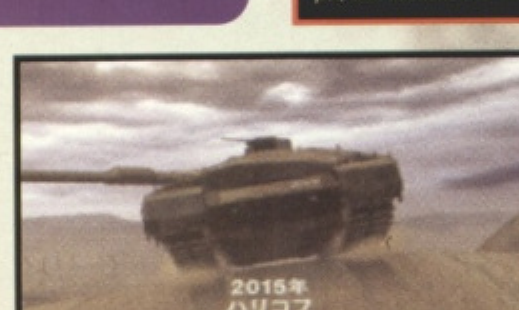


Anti-tank missiles. These are the most powerful weapons you have, but you only a few of them at your disposal. They are most useful for the airborne opponents, as they have homing capabilities. However, they may miss the quicker opponents.



Oi, Beanhead. Did you spill my pint of cleaning oil? If I had my way, you'd be melted into a minging pot, and auctioned on the Great Antiques Hunt.





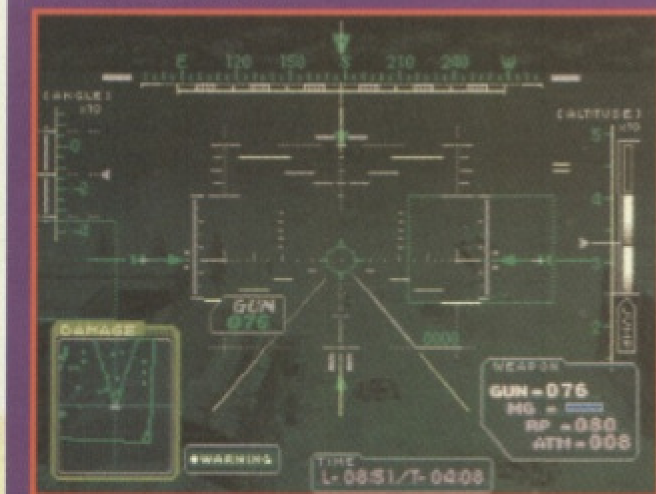


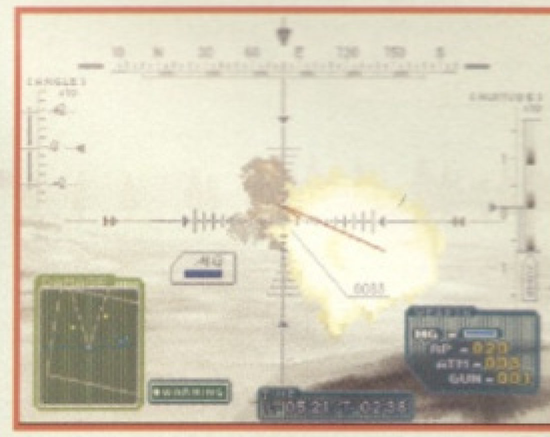




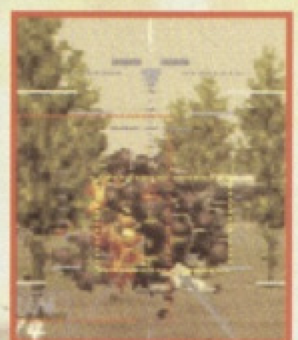
THERMAL IMAGERY

It's a well-known fact that robots can't see in the dark. So to counter this problem, each of the griffons have been fitted with a thermal sight vision adaptor type thing. What it basically does is make all the enemy robots stand out. The only downside to this is that the rest of the screen turns a decidedly dodgy green colour, which means that viewing everything else becomes much harder.

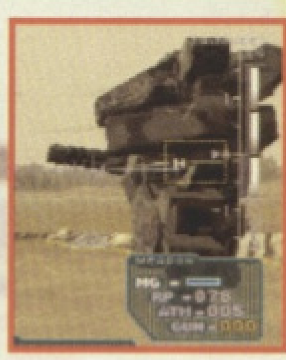








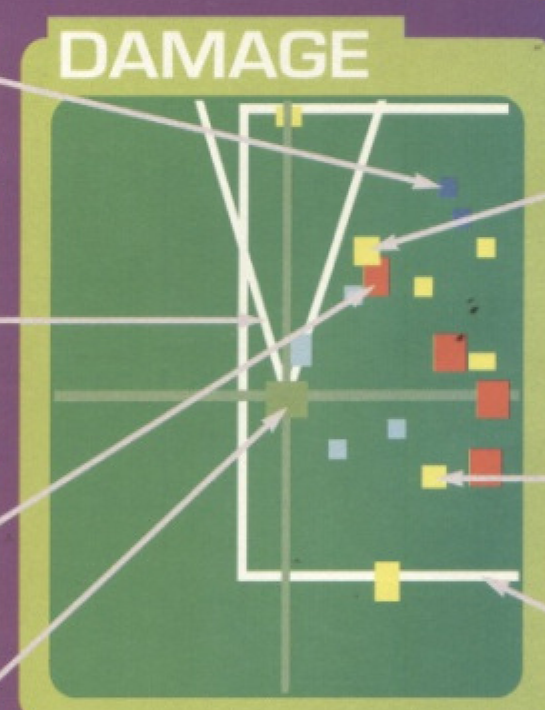


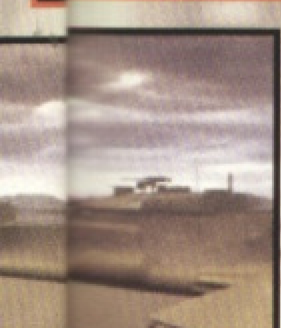


RADAR RATRACE

It got the attention of all the retro freaks anyway. Located in the bottom left corner of the gaming area is the radar, which plays an integral part of your process to get further into the game. MEAN MACHINES gives you the vital info you need to know.





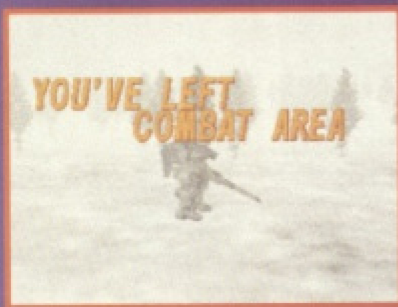






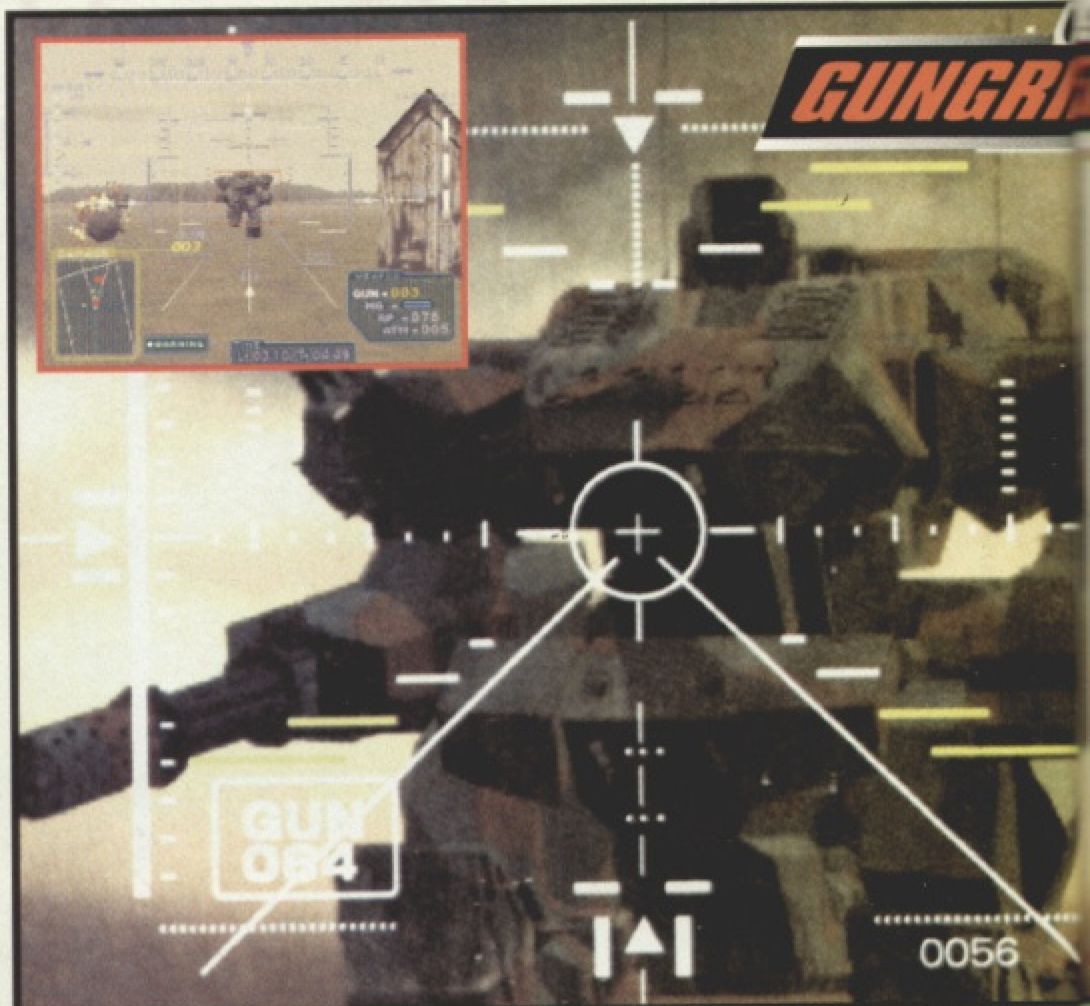


THERE'S NO LIMITS



If the game area was an unlimited size, then the games would last an age as the bad griffons would simply wander around and you'd never be able to find them. Games are therefore limited by time and geography, meaning any wandering rogues will be punished as that particular go will end. The game does warn you when you are getting too near the boundary, as a series of beeps will get quicker and slightly louder the closer you get.









COLOURS ARE WILD MAN!

In the normal game mode (without your thermal sight on) the game has three forms of targets. When an enemy is really far away, and barely in sight, the target is really wide, meaning a hit is harder to achieve. The closer you get, the smaller the target, and the clearer your opponent becomes. When the actual sight is over the enemy, the target starts to flash, and that is the time to let rip with the artillery. If hunting using your radar, don't shoot anything in blue as they're your buddies, but pummel anything that appears in a red or yellow target, because they're out to get you.







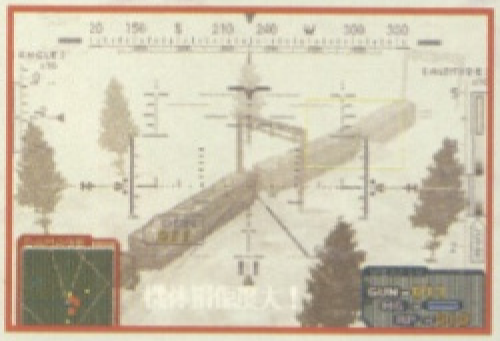




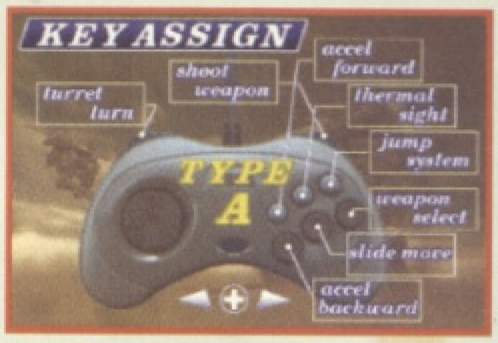








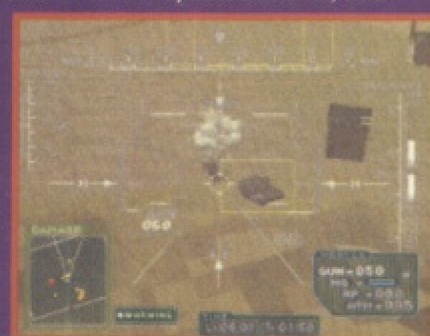




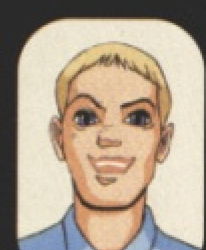


JUMP AROUND!

Bored with your standard single direction movements? Tired of going the same old way all the time? If the answer is yes, then try new Boost-O-Matic. Available in an unrepeatable offer, this super attachment plugs onto the side of your robot and gives you the ability to leap vertically, and hover in the air for a few seconds. This gives you time to survey the surrounding area at a lofty altitude, and still attack any pesky helicopters that might be in your way. Buildings can also be leapt in a single bound as well, should the need arise.



COMMENT



STEVE

The more I play this game, the more it grows on me and the more I realise what a quality piece of coding this is. The fantastic intro sets the scene for what you think will be an awesome graphical tour de force, but I was left with a slightly let-down feeling in that respect. The playbility, however, more than makes up for the occasionally dodgy graphics. The game is really addictive, and once the controls have been mastered (which may take a few goes anyway) the ultra-smooth nature in which the game runs become apparent. The pace of the action never lulls, as there is always something to kill, or at least hunt down. The sounds are best experienced through Dolby Surround, but for the standard TV owners out there, the thuds of machinery and robot beeps are still suitably impressive. If the graphics and potential repetition don't worry you, then you'll enjoy this highly polished piece of software.

COMMENT



MARCUS

I agree with Steve that Gungriffon's graphics never quite live up to the promise of the extraordinary intro sequence, but that's where my gripes end. The highlight of this unusual combat game is becoming immersed in cat and mouse games with enemy artillery – it can get frustrating trying to hit fast-moving tanks, but strafing something until it explodes with spectacular effect is very satisfying. The varying terrains disguise the similarities betwen each mission, and the hover faciility allows you to go head-to-head with helicopter gunships in Thunderhawk 2 style. Don't be dissuaded by the rough-around-the-edges look of some of the screen shots – this definitely plays better than it looks.

GRAPHICS 85

▲The intro is one of the best seen anywhere.
▼But other sections let the overall feel down.

ANIMATION 88

▲Some of the quicker robots are particularly well animated, and look very realistic.

MUSIC 80

▼No in-game music to speak of, which is disappointing, but other music is good.

EFFECTS 89

▲The beeps and explosions are all from the top drawer.

PLAYABILITY 88

▲Get over the initial control problems and this becomes really playable.
▼Not really enough variety.

LASTABILITY 89

▲Even on easy this represents a pretty stiff challenge.

OVERALL 88

An excellent game, only slightly spoilt by occasionally lacklustre graphics.







Virtua Fighter



BY SEGA

RELEASE TBA

PRICE TBA

GAME TYPE BEAT 'EM UP

PLAYERS 1-2

MEG 8

BREAK DOWN

ORIGINALITY

CHALLENGE

ACTION

STRATEGY

REFLEXES

OPTIONS

CONTROL
JOYPAD

GAME DIFFICULTY
AVERAGE

CONTINUES
5

SKILL LEVELS
1

RESPONSIVENESS
GOOD

ORIGIN

The world's greatest beat 'em up makes its debut on the Game Gear, complete with a new story mode.

GAME AIM

Assemble a team of crack fighters, and select the best person to face each opponent.

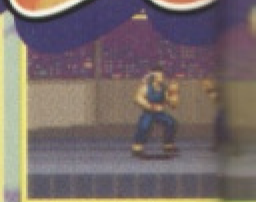
BEAT THIS

BEAT DURAL.

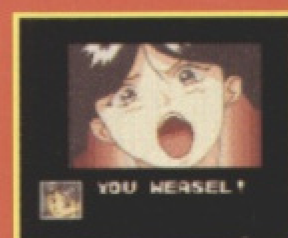
Last month's Virtua Fighter preview gave us a taste of what to expect from a game no-one thought they'd ever see. OK, the Game Gear version of the world's greatest beat 'em up doesn't quite bring you the full coin-op experience, but it goes some way towards making up for this by providing a 'story mode' which knits together each bout in a woolly tale of honour, snogs and scraps.

Progression to the next stage is only possible after knocking out your opponent in your current 'Act'. If all this seems a bit too strenuous, then there is also the option to play a straight version of the game (in a 'zooming' or static view) either against the computer or another player in link-up mode.





ACT I – BIG TROUBLE



Pai Chan is in Hong Kong, being chased by a street gang called the Crazy Dragons. Their leader, Liu Gaolun, wants to take the unwilling film starlet as his wife. Pai dashes into a restaurant and bumps into Akira – who promptly kisses the astonished girl. Unfortunately for him, he's caught her on a bad day...



ACT II – THE BOUNCER



The restaurant's bouncer spots Pai and, hoping to claim a reward from Liu, tries to abduct her in his car. Meanwhile, a frankly inexplicable misunderstanding leads Akira into a scrap with Jacky.



ACT III – FATEFUL CLASH





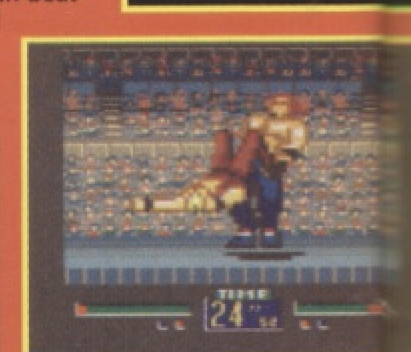
Jacky tells Akira and the rescued Pai that his sister, Sarah, has been kidnapped by the Crazy Dragons. Kage-Maru, a member of the Crazy Dragons, tells them that Sarah will be released when Pai gives herself over to Master Liu. Needless to say, such provocative behaviour can't go without a smack.



ACT IV – THE WOLF'S DEN

An ex-gang member tips the team off that Sarah was taken to an underground fighting arena. Desperate for information, Jacky threatens the arena's owner. The man tells him "If you can beat my champion, I will tell you where she is." His champion is one Wolf Hawkfield...









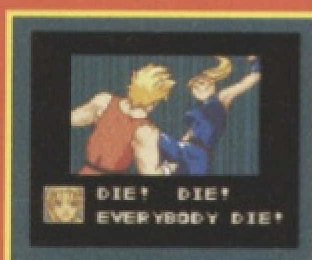


ACT V – THE EUROPEAN CONNECTION

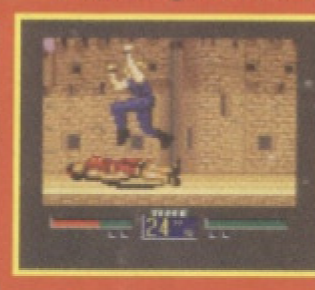
The beaten Wolf joins the group in travelling to Europe, and a castle which is guarded by Kage-Maru. Pai is disgusted by the Ninja's loyalty to the Crazy Dragons. "I sense you are a man of honour – why do you work for someone as despicable as Liu?" But Kage is not for turning...



ACT VI – THE AWAKENING



...At least not until he's had a kicking off the VF boot squad. The defeated Kage takes them to Sarah – who has been brainwashed. "Die! Die! Everybody die!" she screams, attacking her brother.



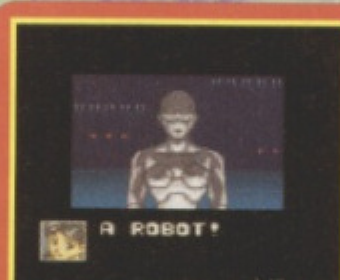


ACT VII – WEDDING BELLS

Sarah is beaten, and snaps out of the mind control. At the Crazy Dragons' HQ, Pai's arms and feet are shackled as she is forced to become Liu's unwilling bride. Lau Chan, Liu's former instructor in the martial art Koen-Ken, arrives and challenges Akira.

ACT VIII – ENTER: DURAL

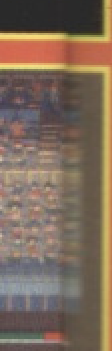






The defeated Lau joins forces with Akira, Jacky, Sarah, Pai, Kage and Wolf against Liu. The Crazy Dragons' leader is desperate and, against the advice of his staff, sends in his secret weapon – an experimental robot called Dural...





GRAPHICS 88

▲Varied backgrounds, plentiful comic-strip style pics in the story mode and the clever 'real time' zoom function are all plus points.

ANIMATION 87

▲The Game Gear struggles with such a complex game, but the opponents kick, punch and spin round fairly convincingly.

MUSIC 72

▲Obviously annoying...
▼...but the some of the story mode tunes are OK.

EFFECTS 80

▲You're occasionally rewarded with snatches of speech from Akira and Pai (at least we think it's them).

PLAYABILITY 90

▲Difficult to fault, taken on its own terms.

LASTABILITY 89

▲The story mode is too easy to complete, and you won't want to play it through twice.
▼The other options have much greater long-term appeal.

OVERALL

As Game Gear beat 'em ups go, this is top of the tree. But it's not Virtua Fighter.

89

COMMENT



MARCUS

Another 8 meg Game Gear cartridge, and a big improvement over last year's so-so Garfield platformer. Of course, there's no way the Game Gear could ever present a true facsimile of Virtua Fighter, however many meg were packed into the cartridge, but what we have here is something that plays like a quality 2-D beat 'em up and looks a bit like VF, with a few of the moves preserved from the original. Although it might sound a bit daft, you're left with the impression of a having played something surprisingly faithful to the original. At the very least, this has got to be the finest traditional beat 'em up available for this ailing format.

COMMENT



STEVE

I'm sorry, but I couldn't bring myself to like this really. It's not that I'm comparing it to the Saturn version, which is pointless, it's just that I didn't find this any fun at all. The story mode provides a few chuckles when you play it first time around, but after that it becomes decidedly boring. And although a few of the moves that are part and parcel of the original are in here as well, a 2-D version of Virtua Fighter just doesn't work in my opinion. I can see why a lot of people will go for this, especially the Game Gear owners who feel let down by Sega, but the diehard gamesplayers out there might find Streets of Rage better value.





BY ACCLAIM

RELEASE NOW

PRICE TBA

GAME TYPE SHOOT 'EM UP

BREAK DOWN

1-2 PLAYERS

ORIGINALITY

CHALLENGE

ACTION

STRATEGY

REFLEXES

OPTIONS

CONTROL
JOYPAD

GAME DIFFICULTY
AVERAGE

CONTINUES
14!

SKILL LEVELS
3

RESPONSIVENESS
SLUGGISH

ORIGIN

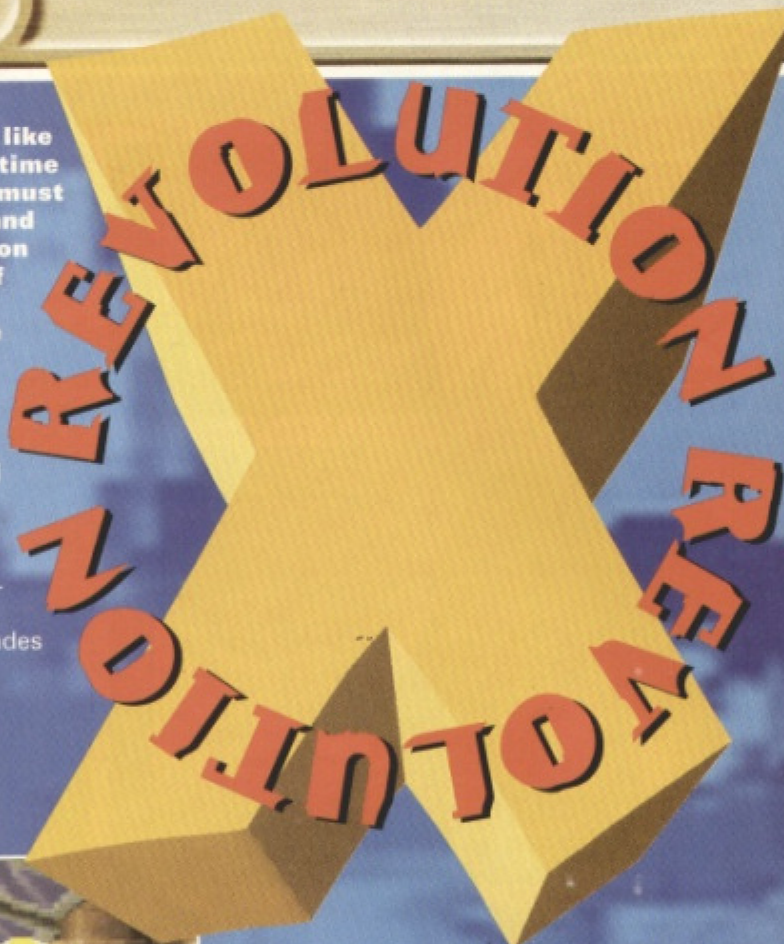
Based on a Bally/Midway coin-op of 1994, in which Aerosmith star.

GAME AIM

Trash the entire place. 'Free the world'.

BEAT THIS

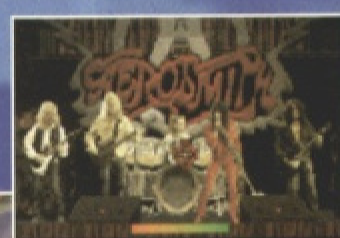
Millions and millions.



Aerosmith must have seemed like a good idea at the time, the time being the Seventies. But so must have platform heels, flares and Afghan coats. We've moved on from that now, but Aerosmith — part of a select club including the Ramones, Status Quo and Supertramp — continue to 'rock on' well past their shelf life.

The marketing idea of having Aerosmith front a shoot 'em up coin-op must have been a joint love-in. It gets the greasers into the arcade, thinking that at last video games are all 'rawk 'n' roll', and it updates the rather saggy spandex image of Steven Tyler and co. by going digital, man.

All that's left to do is concoct a ridiculous men-in-gas-masks-led-by-bolshy-Brit-bird-take-over-the-world plot, gratuitous images of busty blondes and have the player destroy everything on screen. You now have Revolution X.





CARRY ON KILLING

The best bits are when Aerosmith appear in crudely digitised form, or appear on a video left for you. Most of the sprites give a better performance, but there's one classic moment when Tyler throws the keys of his car to you. Aerosmith's motor — cool!





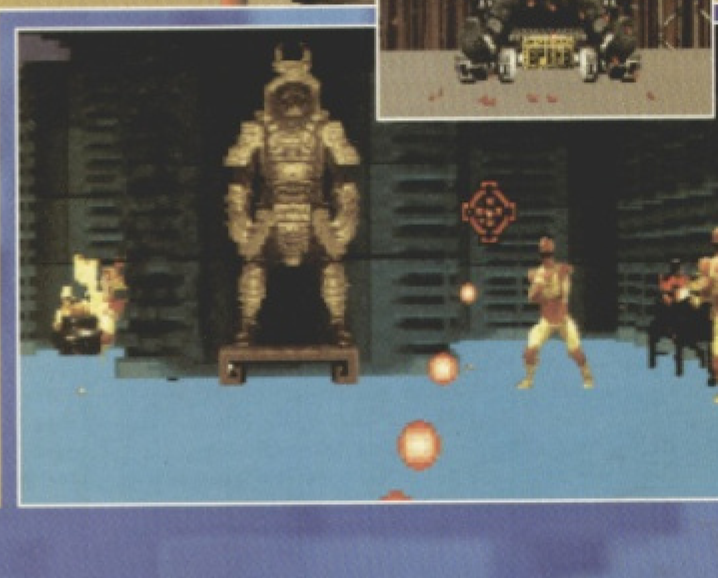


TRACKER

Now and then you're given a choice of routes. These take you on subtly different paths through the level, some ways more difficult or time-consuming than others. Just shoot the CD controls.

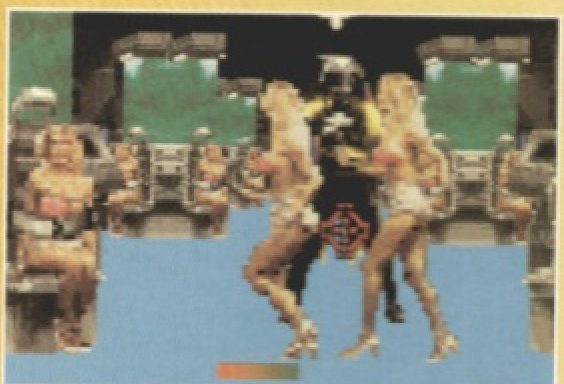


See this, right? Well this option screen is perhaps the highlight of the game.



GIRLS ON FILM

Aerosmith have always been infamous for their unashamed bimbo worship. Revolution X is gals, gals , gals, with blondes held captive on many levels. Free them of their bonds and they'll teeter off-screen in their heels and you'll get a bonus.



COMMENT



GUS

Part of Acclaim's charm is that they're quite capable of throwing up the odd stinker once in a while, and this is surely one. The coin-op was bollocks, with no skill demanded and no sensible way of avoiding most of the enemy fire thrown at you. It was a money grabber. The Saturn version doesn't keep gobbling coins, but it does retain the gameplay faults which are of San Andreas proportions. The graphics, particularly the video images of the band, are considerably cruder. If you already like Revolution X you're probably insane enough to ignore these comments. I can't deny that it made us laugh for a bit, but then we didn't pay forty quid for it.



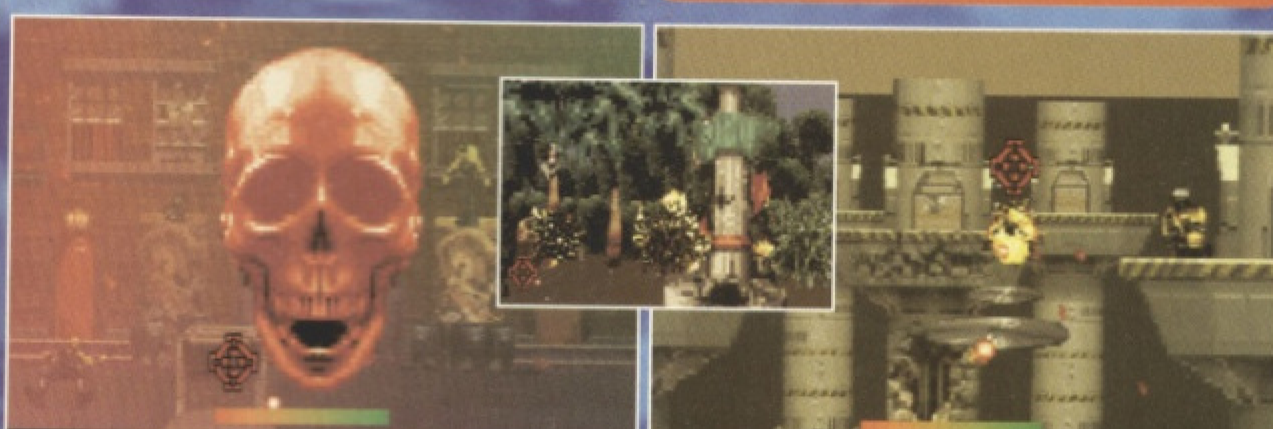
Please don't be fooled into thinking that this game is in any way good, fun, or worth buying. Spending an evening at the Anoraks Anonymous Society, as they discuss the nominations for their forthcoming awards for most rubbery costumes and best waterproof coats, would be a better evening's entertainment.

COMMENT



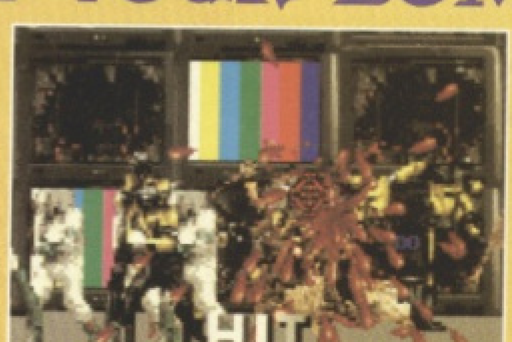
MARCUS

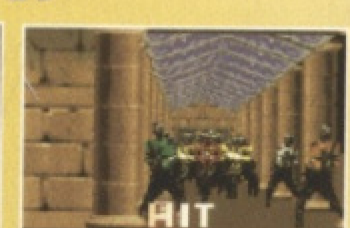
While slumped, zombie-like, before this monumentally misjudged game, I pondered a number of thoughts. For example, does there come a point where truly excruciating games, like truly excruciating films, become so bad that they're actually quite compelling?
Revolution X briefly elicits a strange curiosity about what lies around each corner – more babes? more blokes in gas masks? Or, thrill of thrills, will Mr Tyler actually talk to us? Needless to say, all such curiosity soon wore off and I was left with what can only be described as the most abysmal Saturn game it's ever been my misfortune to play. Avoid.



RELEASE YOUR LOAD

You don't have to reload your weapon at all in Revolution X. It's not even a sensible idea to take your finger off the trigger. The only limit in your firepower is the supplementary CD weapon. These 'platters' slice through most things and are good for bosses, but must be replaced by recovering bonus discs from crates or the scenery.





Two cows in a field. One says to the other, "Are you worried about this mad cow disease?" The other says, "Why should I be? I'm a tractor."

GRAPHICS 52
▼Crude scaling, brutalised sprites, crappy backgrounds. Consistent, at least.

ANIMATION 45
▼Terrible, just when you though the idea of wobbly sprites was a historical one.

MUSIC 79
▲It's hardly the greatest hits of Aerosmith, but they chug along nicely.

EFFECTS 70
▼ Poor explosions and spot effects.

PLAYABILITY 39
▼Virtually unplayable is an apt assessment. There's no way to tackle the game with skill.

LASTABILITY 37
▼Becomes tedious very quickly, despite the humour value of its crassness.

OVERALL
Revolution X is monkey dung. The choice is yours.

38

Cutthroat Island

RELEASE: ....OUT NOW	MEG:.............................. 16
PLAYERS:......................1-2	PRICE:.......................£39.99
BY: ....ACCLAIM	GAME TYPE:..SLICE 'EM UP

"Ahoy there, shipmates, here's a rum scheme to make us rich!" growled the salty sea dog. His battle-weary crew gathered round to hear Captain Film License speak. "This 'ere Cutthroat Island – I reckon there be a pretty penny to be made off the back of that."

"But it's pants!" shouted Roger, the cabin boy. "Shut up!" bellowed the Captain, silencing his men. "We're going to attack this one from all sides – bit of platform stuff, a minecart level and some Streets of Rage-style brawling. How can we lose?" His men gazed up in disbelief. "How long have we got?" asked one of them. "I want the game out in March," growled the Captain. "But that's no time at all!" protested the man. "And with barely a ha'penny between us, how can we make the plan work?" The Captain trembled with rage, the corners of his mouth foaming as he spat out his orders. "You scurvied sea dogs will do what you're told. It's a fine film, and it'll be a fine game. Get to it!" Reluctantly, the sailors hoisted the Jolly Roger and the good ship Acclaim set sail for another voyage. "Well," one of the crewmen mumbled to another, "that's us scuppered."

GRAPHICS 19
Shoddy, repetitive, backgrounds and very basic characters.

EFFECTS 10
Erm, now let me think...

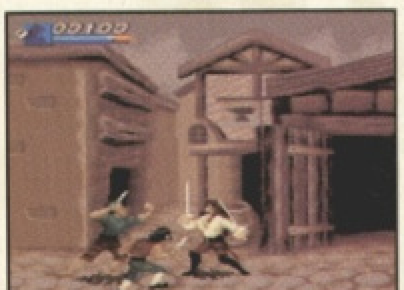
ANIMATION 16
Not nearly fluid enough to cope with the sprites' demanding movements.

PLAYABILITY 14
An endurance test that requires hardly any skill.

MUSIC 15
Accordian-style sea shanties that are very basic by current standards.

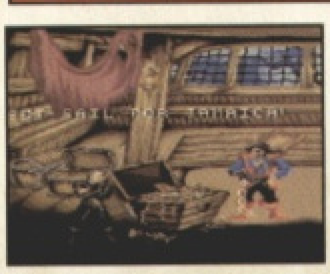
LASTABILITY 12
Well, what do *you* think?

OVERALL 14
A half-baked film tie-in of the very worst order. Appalling.

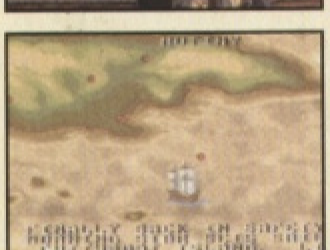


The Cutthroat Island movie sank its production company, Carolco – here, our flame-haired heroine Geena offers some friendly financial advice to the company's angry debtors.













COMMENT



STEVE

Aaahhh! Real Monsters, Power Rangers and VR Troopers used to be my least favourite Megadrive games. That was until I saw Cutthroat Island. I'd like to cut the throats of the people responsible for this. Just what were they thinking? In fact, this game is so bad that I don't even want to talk about it anymore. So, did anyone watch the Brit Awards Uncut then? Bit of a let down really, other than Jarvis's bit. Oh and what about...

COMMENT



MARCUS

This must be my lucky month. Not only have I had to play Revolution X, a truly abysmal Saturn title, but I've had to endure Cutthroat Island, undoubtedly the worst Megadrive game I've ever had to review. Where to start on this one? Frustrating game design, dreadful animation, dull graphics...the whole sorry affair adds up to a real mess of a game that must surely rank as one of the Megadrive's all-time stinkers. That this tatty throwback should have been released by a company of Acclaim's stature is very worrying indeed.

SHIVER ME TIMBERS

Although Cutthroat Island is a game of several different styles and a number of different locations, most of the gameplay sees you beating up a procession of dim-witted opponents that stroll on to the screen and mill about in a fairly daft fashion. You can punch them up by selecting 'brawling mode ' or skewer them if you choose to play in 'swashbuckling mode'. Whether you're in swashbuckling or brawling mode, you'll find the 'special moves' you earn after successful completion of each level come in handy.

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SEGA SATURN

- OUT ON THE 22ND OF EACH MONTH
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SEGA SATURN OUT NOW

May. Month of local elections and dancing around large phallic poles in ancient fertility rituals, the celebration of labour and the warm kiss of approaching high summer. And, surprisingly, a few video games. This month we round up some absentees from 'Out Now' covering the last couple of months of shop-type activity.

VALORA VALLEY GOLF

VIRGIN
£44.99
1-8 PLAYERS
GOLF

OUT NOW



Golf is a select interest in the video game sphere, limited we suspect to those who are NOT VERY GOOD at Sega Rally, Virtua Fighter and Panzer Dragoon, ie, dads (and to a lesser extent) mums. Squares they may be, but they're entitled to know how the latest simulation fares in comparison to the others. Valora Valley is at once wildly different and utterly conventional. The interface and graphic styling are almost exactly like those of Pebble Beach Golf – because the same company made both. The wild side resides in the bizarre fantasy hole designs, some of which are mortally hard, and the strange selection of 'special moves' experienced players are capable of. The result? An almost jovial on-course experience.

OVERALL 84

As exciting as golf gets, but more than one course is required for true greatness.

STREETFIGHTER ALPHA

VIRGIN
£44.99
1-2 PLAYERS
BEAT 'EM UP





OUT NOW

Capcom have not put a foot wrong since the temporary fall from grace of Streetfighter: The Movie. Now they have more than made amends for that slur on the 'legend' by producing a pristine conversion of their acclaimed arcade game of the same name.

The basic action, graphic-style and a good few of the characters go straight back to the 1992 SF2 coin-op, but with a level of game complexity that only prolonged play and a fair amount of skill uncovers. If ever there was a game for the proficient beat 'em up specialist, Alpha is it.

Virgin are releasing the game as the affiliate label in the UK and it should do no harm to their reputation. The slickness of the options interface alone confirms that Capcom know exactly what they are doing within this field. We can now hope for some more variant titles of an equal quality.

OVERALL 94

Streetfighter Alpha more than fulfils the imperatives of a home conversion. It's damned near perfect.

TOHSHINDEN

SEGA
£39.99
1-2 PLAYER
BEAT 'EM UP

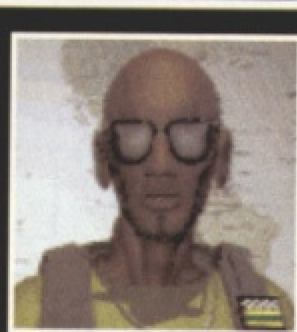
OUT NOW

Sega's main reason for releasing this is to broaden the Saturn's fighting game canon yet further. It was the first decent Playstation game of 1994, and decently converted, but is left looking miserable by this year's Virtua Fighter 2. In Tohshinden's scant defence, you can point to some gameplay differences: Tohshinden relies more on magical attacks than close combat, and is generally easier to grasp. But by any reasonable estimation there is no contest – get VF2.

OVERALL 74

Takara's fairly anaemic rendition of fleshy 3-D fighting action. Few bangs and plenty of whimperings.

SHELLSHOCK
CORE
£44.99
1 PLAYER
SHOOT 'EM UP





OUT NOW

Shellshock ambitiously sets out to meld Tarantino-movie coolness with retro gaming simplicity in a tank-powered destructo-quest owing much to ancient coin-ops such as Battlezone (and less than you might expect to Core's big hit Thunderhawk).
All the groundwork put into creating a team of charismatic characters, with a hip-hop soundtrack to match, is fair enough, even if they whole thing has been left in the oven at gas mark 10 for a little too long. The main gripe is (and must always be) the gameplay, which is simply less satisfying or developed than Thunderhawk, even if it does share the same multiple mission structure. Short-lived 35mm hedonism.

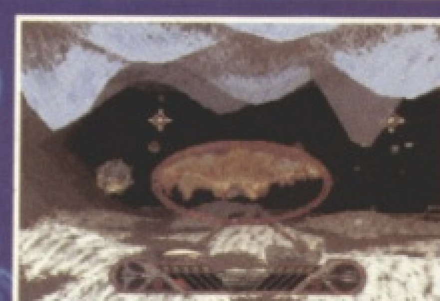
OVERALL 75

There's something ultimately unsatisfying about this long-awaited artillery epic.

TITAN WARS
BMG
£39.99
1 PLAYER
SHOOT 'EM UP







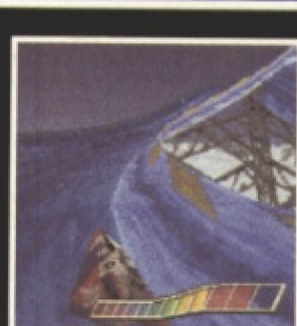
OUT NOW

In 1000 years someone will open up the BMG time casket, find Titan Wars, blow the dust of ye ancient Saturn in the Temple of Sonic, load it up, play it and say: "ee, if this aint a reet load of old cobblers". The mists of time will be unable to disguise the crassness of this old 3DO port over.
Now the 3DO isn't all bad. It hardly deserves to be the laughing stock it is, but its reputation was done no good by Crystal Dynamics' Total Eclipse. It's a one-pace, one direction space shoot 'em up staggeringly short on interest or character. And now its been inflicted on the Saturn in the form of Titan Wars.

OVERALL 51

Should be retitled Titanic Wars, as this is a vast waste of anyone's time.

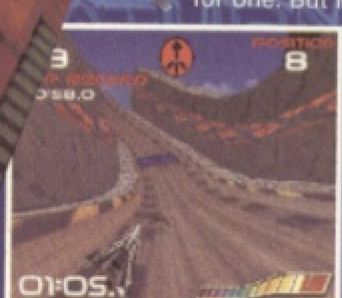
WIPEOUT
PSYGNOSIS
£39.99
1 PLAYER
RACING GAME



OUT NOW

It's done and out for some time, but there's no excuse for not buying Wipeout. If only for that glorious release from the feeling that having a Saturn denies you the best of the Playstation. Now you truly have it. If only, Sony owners, it were vice versa. Wipeout is a great racer, with its own classic character and an exceptional audio-visual prowess. There are some minor differences between the formats – we won't pretend – this version is less taxing, for one. But it's just as much FUN.







OVERALL 91

The Pammy of racing games, and you can be Tommy Lee for just £40. Get your kit out.

GEX
BMG
£39.99
1 PLAYER
PLATFORM

OUT NOW

Crystal Dynamics win the video game green award yet again, by recycling this 3DO platformer, for the 'eager' Saturn masses. There aren't a lot of platformers on the Sega machine yet, but a couple: Rayman and Bug! are pretty good. Gex is sandwiched between these proper purchases and the true abomination of Johnny Bazookatone. It's more varied and entertaining than the Clockwork Knight games, but can't compete in looks or personality. Gex himself is an aggravating little reptile.





OVERALL 57

Vermin often make good platform game characters, but this only Gex on our nerves.

MEAN YOB

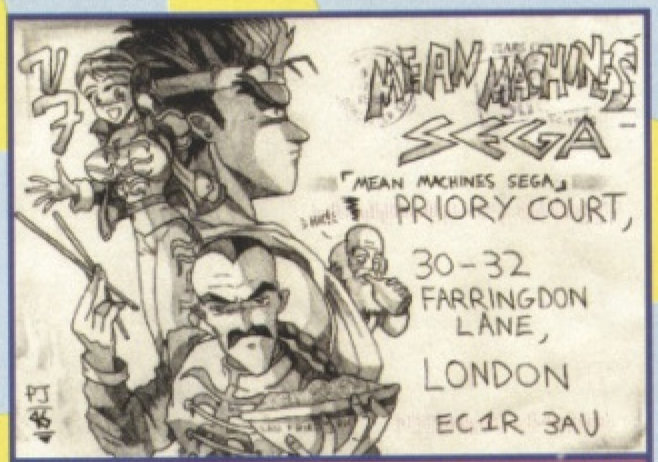
Attention: if the Prince Harry/Chris Eubank soundalike who keeps ringing up happens to be reading, we are getting very annoyed with you. Not only did this bloke fall for C&VG's Pedro/Ultimate MK 3 April Fool (they said you could get Ultimate on the Playstation version of MK3), he also called the deputy editor (Tom Guise) an idiot and slammed the phone down. Then, to top it all off, he phoned us up, having seen our next month 'Gamespotting' page in Saturn mag, and asked whether Mean Machines was making a new magazine called Gamespotting. So, if you are reading, then heed these words of advice. Get a degree in common sense at Eton or wherever you go, and try phoning up with something original.
Everyone else, send your letters to PONCE ROYAL MAILBAG, MEAN MACHINES SEGA, PRIORY COURT, 30-32 FARRINGDON LANE, LONDON, EC1R 3AU.

HAVING A BAB

Dear Yob,
You are a little monkey spanker whose life has amounted to the equivalent of a pile of baboon crap in the corner of a round room. In the May No. 43 copy of MMS, you admitted to knowing what happens to crud after it has come out of that hole that I call my arse and you call your mouth. So you must be one of those sad trainspotters that turd into their hand and watch in excitement as it goes dry and flaky.
Well if you are not insulted yet, hear this. When you were born, Lassie (I mean your mum) was doing a bab when you plopped out and she accidentally mistook you for a bog brush because of that sad bit of arse fluff you call 'hair.'
P.S. If you take the p*ss out of my name, as people often do, the I'll hunt you down, rip off your balls (if you have any), feed them to next door's rabbit and post them back to you after it craps them out. Even then they probably wont be any bigger.
Adam Lowe, Wakefield, Yorkshire.
YOB:I could start getting into insults about you and your mum, and how I saw her being washed down the drain with all the other bits of clag. Oh, I forgot, you haven't got any water in Yorkshire.

ANGRY READER FIGHTS BACK!

Dear Yob,
How much I laughed whilst reading the turd encrusted letters of Chris Purdie, David Jenkins and er, the 'sex god.' Do life forms and scum like this really exist? I really did want to start this letter off politely with frolicking bunnies and the like, but oh no. I can't pass up on the opportunity to take the p*ss out of some of the more vomit-inducing readers of yours.
Hello Mrs Chris Purdie (a big fan of the Avengers are you?), or should I say Mr Festering Turd stuck to a donkey's (probably his mum) hot and sweaty rectum, who has a severe diarrhoea problem? Anyway, how dare you send a letter of 'utmost importance' talking about yourself to the hallowed, sacred pages of MMS. I bet if you found a dog turd on the pavement you'd probably eat it thinking it was a Mars Bar. Just sod off to whichever radioactive sewer you came from.
Next on my hit list is an anorak fiend who hides under the title 'sex god.' Yeah, right, in your dreams. Shame it can't tell that that your face looks like the crusty bits of a baboon's hairy butt, can it? Birds don't crap on your flea pit, as it's not worth crapping on. Now be away with you, you sad pimply git.
Now, David Jenkins. Did you ever go to school? I doubt it. You were probably stuffing your greasy face with chips whilst simultaneously (look it up, monkey face) giving the mannequins in the windows dirty looks. Bring back happy days does it? You are beyond help and should be duly fed to the to your brother (you know, the thing your mother grew in a petri dish alongside you).
At least Mean Yob and everyone else can have a good laugh at your pathetic attempts at trying to string three letter words together unsuccessfully. Now bloody well sod off before I shove something VERY painful up each of those oversized rectums of yours. Oh, yeah if you EVER venture out of your crappy hole, just watch your backs...
Neil Ramsden, West Wickham,
YOB:Are you the Rectum inspector or something? You seem to have quite a fixation for them. Anyway, I referred this letter to the National Examinations of Rectum Disorders (or NERD for short) and they agreed that you have a serious problem. The people from ANUS (Association for Nerds Under Stress) will be round for you in the next few days, Live long and prosper, plebbo.



Another awesome drawing sent in by the talented Paul Johnson. This was on the envelope of his letter to Mean Yob. Keep them coming in!

JOHNSON IS BACK!

Dear Yob,
Oi! If you want someone to bore you to death, ask our beloved Prime Minister to write an article on frozen peas. Anyway, I was looking back over my copies of MM to the good old days when people used to actually write interesting letters, not just the usual "Yob, you are fat and smell and my mummy said you're bad." Yes there were a few insults, but at least they were amusing (and even funnier when the Nintendo owners wrote in saying "tell my mate that Mario's better than Sonic 'cos all my friends like Mario and I do too.") So come on kids! No wonder the letters page has shrunk when no-one writes anything worth tearing up and making a papier maché, CD32 out of (Heh, that was funny too... the good old Amiga/Sega wars...). Besides, I'm sick of people turning out the same old festering putrid crap all the time. Infinite clones on VF1 and SF2 are really getting annoying now, and the word 'originality' doesn't seem to be in the 'Ye olde Dictionary of Games Designers' anymore. That's why I'd like to pay homage to 2 software houses: Treasure and Core. Impressive track records don't you think? All they do is release brilliance and originality all of the time, without even stopping to go to the crapper even after a particularly hot chili. Treasure haven't released a bad game, and Core have only made one bad game in their history (Shellshock). Bleedin' damn good jobs all round, so lets have a round of applause! (Clappa-Clappa-Clap).
One more thing, Toy Story. Well, we always knew that Disney weren't very good at drawing by hand (No shading at all. Oh well...) but cheating completely and doing the whole sad thing by computer, just shows even more lack of talent. And to finish, I say this. You want computer graphics? Watch Ghost In The Shell. James Cameron recommends it saying "The first truly adult animation." If however, you're 6 years old, go and see Toy Story. If it doesn't clash with Home and Away, or Playbus.
Paul Johnson, On board the train to reality.
YOB:Zzzzzzzz. Huggmpp. Tup, tup. Sorry, I just nodded off there reading this essay. I thought something nasty had happened to you (like you got a life), as we hadn't heard from you for a while 'PJ' –



by the way, how's Duncan? We didn't realise you'd gone solo.

CONCERNED BEEF EATER

Dear Mean Yob,
I would like to know why your hair is so naff. And why do you always dribble in your pictures? I would also like to know all the cheats for MK1, MK2 and MK3, and if you don't give me them, I'll rip your arms and legs off, then I'll rip all of your insides out and show them to the whole wide world!!! Lastly, I'll put a gun to your head and blow your brains out. I'll write back soon, you fat git!!!
P.S. Have you got Mad Cow disease?
Mark Henshaw, Walton, Peterborough
YOB:Mr Henshaw. Please stop writing in. Ever couple of weeks we receive a batch of letters from him, some for Q&A, and others for me. All of them are asking the same sort of thing (apart from this one) and are worthless. And you have the writing of a lobotomised pig with a nervous twitch in its trotter. Sort your life out pal.



I think this guy has been drinking more than just cups of tea! He looks well jellied!

FREE LITTLE WILLY

Meanest Yob,
I am writing to you as I have a lot in common with you. I am a sad, surf mad, drooling midget with a bog brush for a head (ha, ha). I've got some questions you can answer for me.
1. Why are your flunkies always showing Saturn reviews, and for the past few months only a couple of Megadrive, 32X or CD games?
2. An American sociologist once said, 'A man with a big toy is boasting, or trying to imply he's got a big todger.' Which is your reason?.
3. Why are you so small? I suppose it could be handy for looking up girls skirts, or butting your enemies' shins.
4. Do you insult people for fun, or are you so dumb you don't know any answers?
5. Do you go on nature trips, or are you afraid you might get swallowed like the bug you are?
I.Q. Llanfairfechan, Gwynedd.
YOB:Here's a surprise. Someone from Wales trying to be funny and failing dismally. 1. The reason is that there are far more Saturn games coming out at the moment than Megadrive games, pillock. 2. And you're the sort of bloke who goes round telling everyone that quality and not quantity is what matters. The sure sign of a minute willy. 3. I bet the girls ask you the very same question. 4. I'd answer your questions if you were clever enough to come up with any. All you can manage is some babble about an American Sociologist. Who cares? 5. Funny.


Mortal drunk and in Kombat. Itsch a luverly, hick!, drawwing of the tuff guys, hick!. I coold have the lot of 'em, hick!, 'coz I'm THAT hard!

Ended on a bit of low note there, but I can't always have the perfect page. Something Welsh always seems to creep in. Never mind. Baaaa.

Q&A

I'm doing my best to answer all your questions this month, and with our contractual contacts at Sega, I'm best placed to do that. Some of the maybe, possibly answers might be annoying, but the industry gets quite secretive at this point of the year – just weeks before the big Spring show. I'll be at the Los Angeles E3 show in May, when the true line-up on Saturn and Megadrive up to Christmas will be revealed. Meanwhile send your missives to STRESS Q&A, MEAN MACHINES, 30-32 FARRINGDON LANE, LONDON EC1R 3AU.

JANICE

Dear Gus
Could you answer my questions.
1. Will there be a Sega Rally 2?
2. Will UMK3 come out on the Megadrive?
3. Will there be an EWJ 3?
4. Will there be an X-Men 3 game?
5. Will the Sonic Fighter game come out on the Megadrive?
6. Will there be a Super Skidmarks 2?
7. Will there ever be a 64 bit Sega?
George Cox, Hereford.

GUS: **1. It's very doubtful. The AM divisions have never done sequels of their racing games. Manx TT will be the closest in style to Sega Rally.**
2. No, GT, who have the license are concentrating on Saturn.
3. Possibly, but it's unlikely that Shiny would do it.
4. We haven't seen the last of the X-Men, but there are no firm projects.
5. No.
6. No plans.
7. I'm sure the Saturn isn't the end as far as hardware is concerned.

ZOOT

Dear Gus
Please answer my questions or I'll rip your head off.
1. How long do we have to wait until Daytona 2 comes out? It looks smart.
2. When is Doom coming out for the Saturn and how much will it cost?
3. Will a Road Rash game be released for the Saturn?
4. Have you heard any plans for Theme Park 2 for the Saturn?
5. Is Virtua Fighter ever going to be released on the Megadrive? If not, why not?
6. Do you like Michael Jackson?
7. Any more news on 'Roll Cage,' the Daytona challenger?
8. Do you like the group 10CC (Godley and Creme)?
Barry Bowles, Peterbrough.
GUS: **1. You mean Daytona Remix. Will probably slip out this summer.**
2. At the moment I can't be any



more definite than this year, though I'm meeting Id Software soon.
3. In June, turn to the preview.
4. There are no plans.
5. The Megadrive can't handle Virtua Fighter.
6. Let's just say I'm a member of the Jarvis Cocker fanclub.
7. It's a Playstation only project at present.
8. 10CC are at once a sign of the chicness and the crapness of the Seventies.



WALDORF

Dear Gus
It's good to see that you are at long last progressing out of printing those continual "What is best?" and "Put these in order," requests.
1. At the end of Light Crusader there is a hint of a further 'adventure.' Do Treasure have any plans for a sequel on the Saturn?
2. What happened to Darkseed on the Mega CD? Does anyone have any plans to release a 32 bit version of the game?
3. Do Sega still plan to release Desert Tank on the Saturn? If so, do you have any information regarding a release date?
4. I like the look of Core's Tomb Raider very much indeed. Do you have any more information on the game?
5. Do you have any more information on Sega UK's possible release of a Shining Wisdom/Rayearth double pack?
6. When will we see the Saturn version of Snatcher?
Duncan McCullie, Leigh-on-Sea.

GUS: **1. I have no idea of Treasure's Saturn plans beyond Guardian Heroes, but I figure they'll have three or four dynamite projects planned for late this year/early 1997.**
2. What indeed – the game did appear in Japan, but Cyberdreams obviously couldn't get a deal for the UK. It's now well out of date, anyway.
3. Sega never had a definite plan to do Desert Tank. It's not a bad idea, though.
4. None, apart from the fact that Core were most upset that some PC shots intended for Gamesmaster found there way into a crapola Sega mag without their consent.
5. Mark (at Sega) was p'd off when I said that in News! It was only a tentative suggestion, and won't happen for now. Both games are considered for individual release (and both are very good).
6. Probably never in this country. A completely useless Japanese version has just been released.

STATLER

Dear Gus
I am an old warhero who fought on the beaches of Normandy. It would really make my grandson's day if you print the questions he gave me for you.
1. Would it be a good idea to buy the memory cartridge for the Saturn?
2. I could not play a season on NHL



Hockey because there was not enough memory. When I looked on the memory manager, it showed only one other game saved, but this took up over half of the memory. Is this correct or is there something I've done wrong?
3. What is the best game to buy at the moment?
4. Can you send me all of the Saturn games you don't want anymore, 'cos I can't afford any games. Cheers.
5. If I put my goldfish in the Saturn and turn it on, will I be able to play James Pond?
6. If your not gonna send me your games, why don't you send me new games to review? This way you get a punter's view on games as well.
Martin Pants-fill, Slough

GUS: **1. If you do a lot of game-saving, it soon becomes pretty**

much essential.
2. Depends which game. Games use up a certain amount of the RAM memory units, according to how much data they require to save a position. Games like Sim City need vast amounts of memory, whereas Virtua Cop details, for example, require a smidgen. Most games use small amounts to record high scores.
3. Of the newest games, I'd get Wipeout, Magic Carpet or Streetfighter Alpha. Watch out for Vampire Hunter and Panzer Zwei – there's tons of brilliant stuff out there!
4. We keep them in a library, sorry.
5. Is that an attempt at humour?
6. Thanks, but I like to draw a paycheque.

PROF. BUNSEN

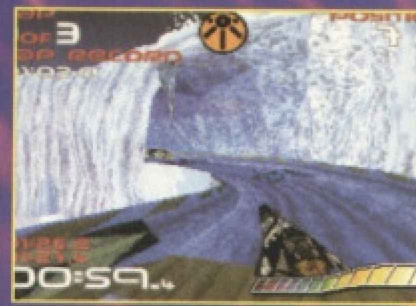
Dear Gus
1. Is there going to be a fourth strike?
2. Is there going to be a Theme Hospital, if so is it going to come out on the Megadrive?
3. Is there going to be a Super Skidmarks 2 for the Megadrive?
4. Should I get a Saturn or should I wait for the Ultra 64?
5. Do you know how I can get Nov No.37 mag, because I lost my one?
Oliver Simmonds, Guildford.

GUS:**1. Yes! I gather you've seen our news exclusive.**
2. Theme Hospital is nearly complete on PC, so a Saturn version should be on the cards.
3. No plans from Codies.
4. Get a Saturn – look at Nights, Fighting Vipers, Virtual On!
5. See our back issues number on the Editorial masthead. Simply phone and ask.

KERMIT

Dear Gus
1. How much does the Action Replay Pro for the Game Gear cost?
2. Have you played the Nomad? If so is it as good as the Game Gear?
3. How long has the Game Gear got left?
4. Which is better: the Game Gear or the Master System?
5. How much does it cost to make a cartridge?
6. How many games are available for the Game Gear?
Robert Hogan, Wicklow, Ireland

GUS**1. About twenty quid.**
2. I haven't played it. I should think it is. It's not coming out here.
3. About thirty minutes.
4. Both are dazzlingly mediocre.
5. About £6-£10 in raw manufacturing terms (depending



on memory size).
6. About 120 have been released, but you'll be hard pressed to find a selection of more than 20 in most shops.

MISS PIGGY

Yo Gus
1. Will Total NBA '96 ever be out for the Saturn?
2. Are there any plans for Virtua Striker in the near future?
3. Can you beat a 123 Hit combo with Ice Man from X-Men: Children of the Atom?
4. My mate Daniel wants a Playstation for Christmas. Will you tell him that he's a nutter, and that Sega are the best?
5. Do you like NBA basketball, if so which team do you support?
Robin F. Berry, Centre for Chicago Bulls.

GUS:**1. Possibly!**
2. No, but IVG '96 has intriguingly Striker-esque qualities.
3. I cannot.
4. He isn't a nutter, but he is being misled. Daniel – I'm telling you – the Saturn has much more potential to develop than the Playstation.
5. I'm not a big fan.

BEAKER

Dear Gus
1. A boy I know said that Nintendo bought out Sega in a court case. Is this true?
2. In issue no 41, in the editorial Lover or Loser answer, the answers add up to a minimum of 17, so what was the point of putting 0-15?
3. Which do you think I should get? Toy Story or Mega Bomberman?
'Dave', Branksome
GUS:**1. This is an untruth of pantular proportions. 2. Erm (thinks rapidly) that's because girls have to start with a minus 10 for being girls. 3. Toy Story.**

ANIMAL

Dear Gus
1. Could I copy the moves from the Virtua Fighter 2 player's guide in issues 41 and 42?



2. Is The Mask coming out for the Megadrive?
3. Do you think Mortal Kombat 4 will be a 3-D beat 'em up game?
4. Will Bug! come out on the 32X?
5. Could I get a Saturn for my new playroom?
6. What is your favourite game on the Saturn?
7. Is Mortal Kombat the movie coming out for the Saturn?
Charles Schofield, Badlesmere.

GUS:**1. Be my guest (?).**
2. Not any more.
3. No.
4. We reported this rumour, but Sega have sadly produced nothing resembling a 32X game for months. We don't like that.
5. What kind of playroom is it?
6. Sega Rally, I'd say.
7. No, there's no such game.

ROLF

Dear Gus
Get rid of that silly goatee beard and let me pick your brains.
1. As I am impatient, I bought a CDX Plus Convertor for my Saturn just so I could play VF2, Sega Rally, F1 and so on. About a couple of months later my on board memory on the Saturn would not work, so I changed the battery. But it still wouldn't work, so I sent it back to be repaired, and they replaced the whole board. Do you think the converter caused the problem?
2. How much do you get paid to look like Hitler?
3. Is NHLPA '96 ever coming out on the Saturn? I think NHL Hockey is crap.
4. If the Playstation is getting Wipeout 2 very soon, then will the Saturn get it?
5. Will there be a Ecco the Dolphin coming out for the Saturn as I think it will make a brill RPG?
6. F1 on the Playstation looks smart, so why didn't Sega do it?
7. How come you can be so ugly with only one head?
Wayne Smith

GUS:**1. Very unlikely.**
2. I beg your pardon!
3. Wait for Powerplay from Virgin, expect NHL in the autumn.
4. I expect No.2 will also be Saturn bound.
5 No Ecco plans.
6. That's a stupid thought to surmise. Developers develop games, they don't just copy others.
7. It's an art I've been practising for the last 25 years. Pardon me, I thought your surname was Kerr.

Let's hope there's nothing there to upset our friends at Hedgehog Towers. Even if there is, stuff them all, I say.

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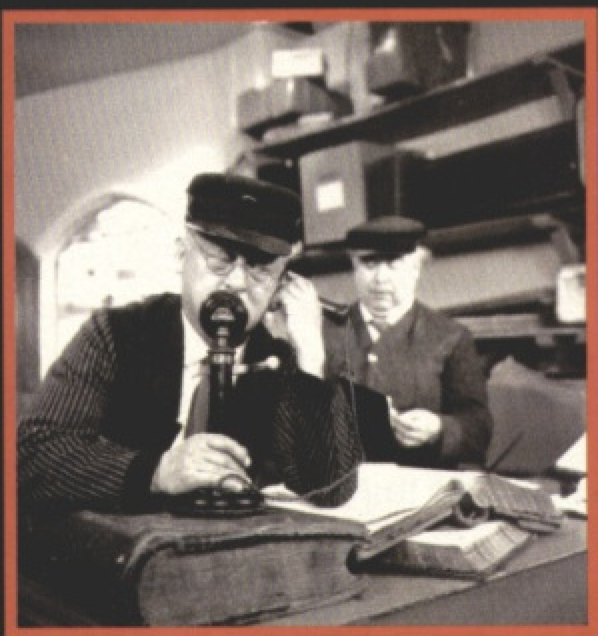
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BRINGING YOU THE E3 SHOW IN ISSUE 45: SIMULATION OF MEAN MACHINES INTERNATIONAL DATA TRANSMISSION SYSTEM



Hi Claire, darling. It's absolutely baking here in LA. I'm at Tom Kalinske's gaff at the moment. Yes, he says we can do Sonic 3-D on Megadrive this month. So make sure you leave room between the Loaded review and the Die Hard feature.



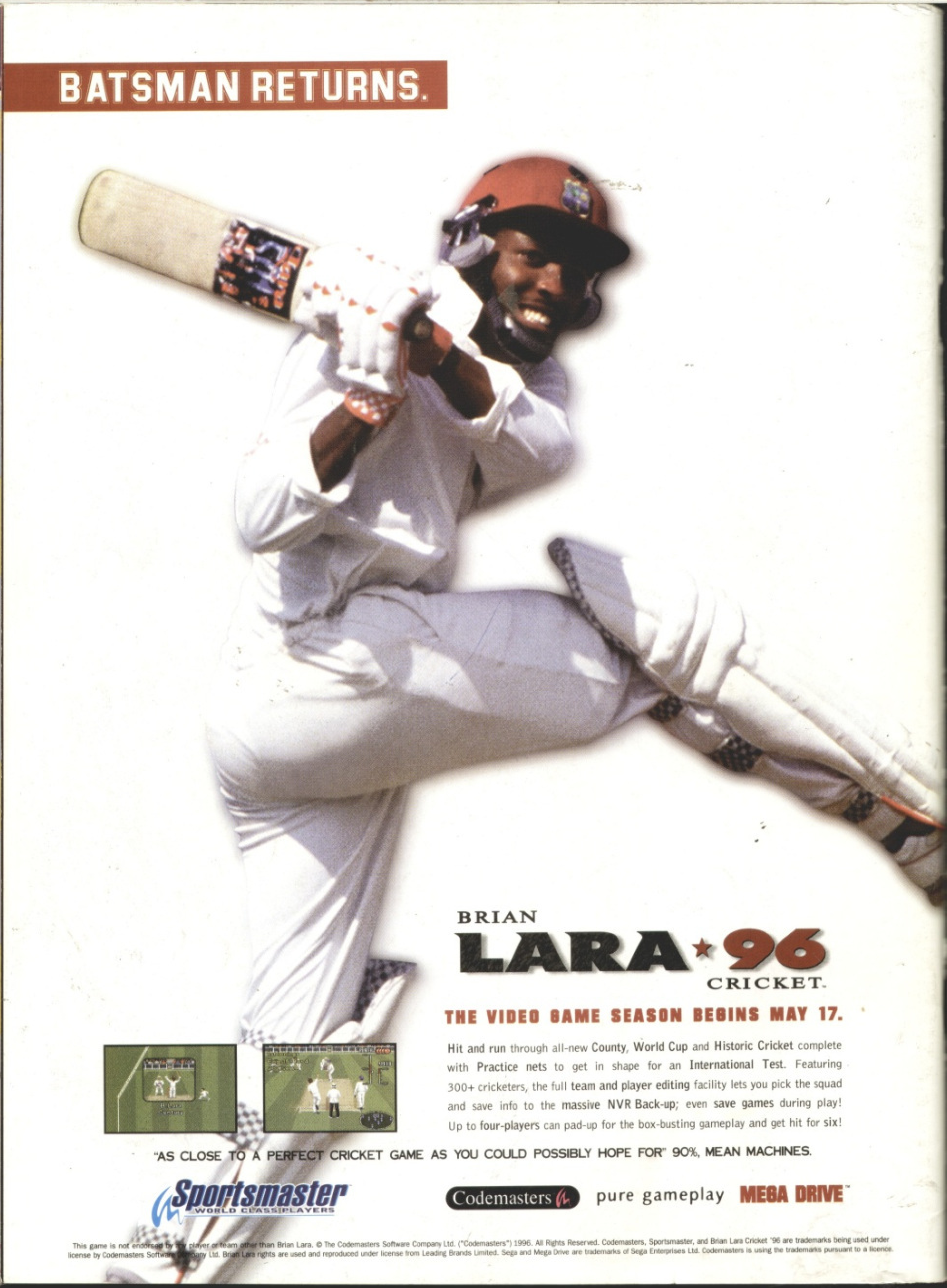
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MEAN MACHINES IS AT THE BIG ONE: E3 IN CALIFORNIA, GUESTS OF SEGA. NEWS ON EVERY MAJOR SATURN AND MEGADRIVE PROJECT FOR THE REMAINDER OF 1996. ALSO TOMB RAIDER, NINJA, ACTUA GOLF, SPACE HULK, JEWEL OF THE ORACLE AND MUCH MORE.

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Gus, sweetie, it's so good to hear from you. Have you written your show report yet? What's happening with Virtual On and Fighting Vipers? Right, I'm off to design Destruction Derby. Prince Harry's on the other line.



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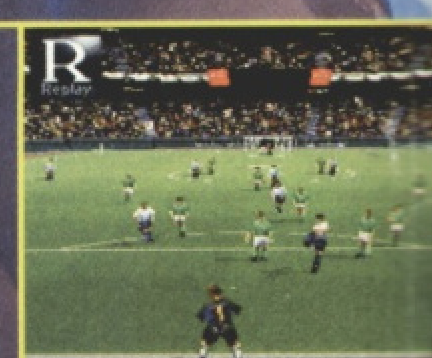
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PREVIEWS





REGULARS

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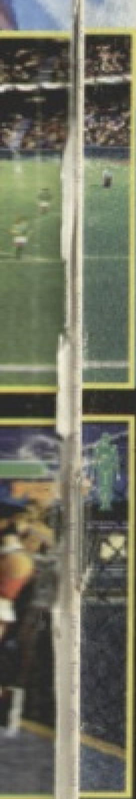


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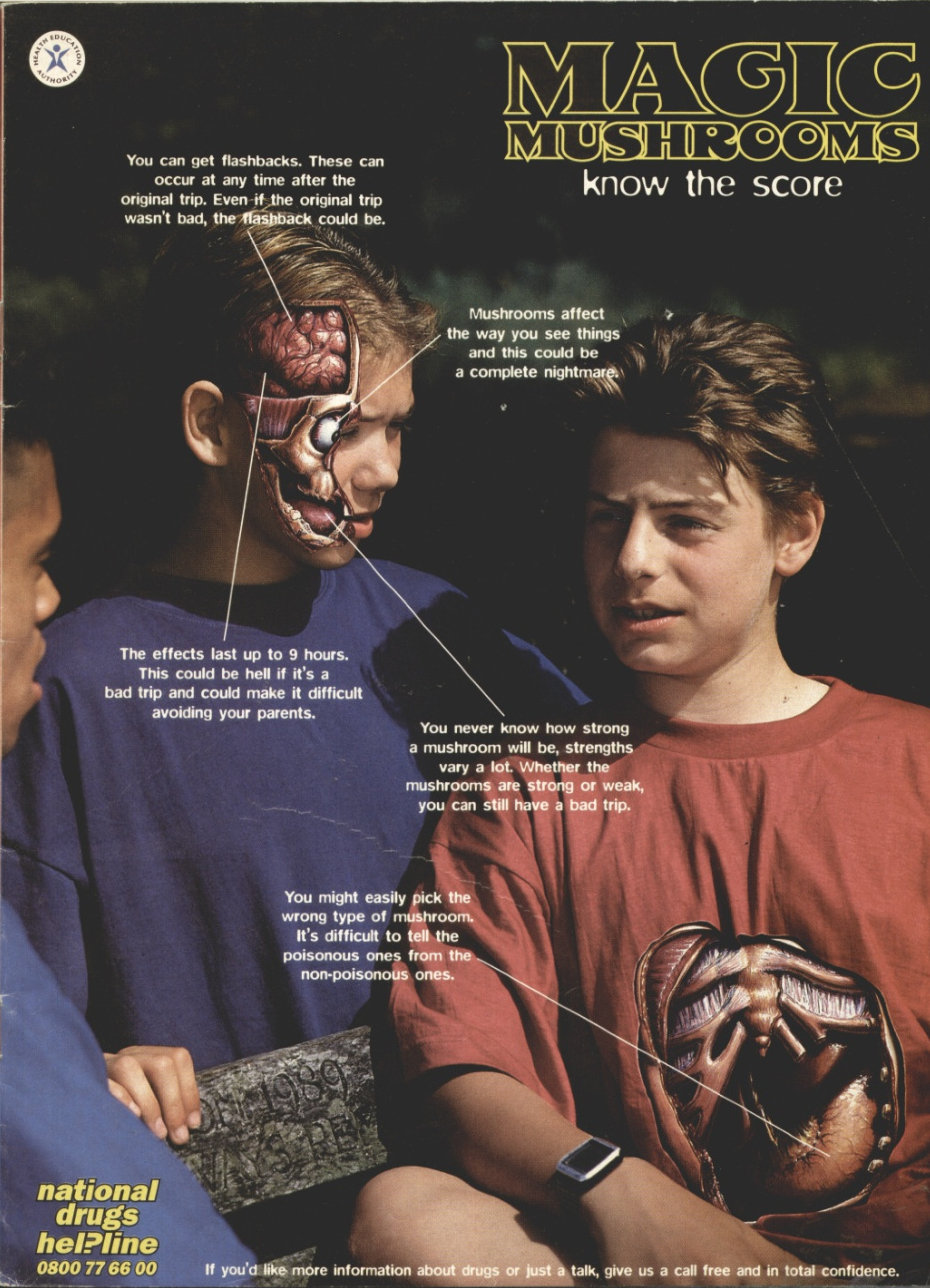
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EDITORIAL

Has it been a month? It certainly doesn't seem so, as this has been one of the busiest for a long time. The team has been working hard on the long-awaited 'new look' for MEAN MACHINES, and you will see their handiwork in next month's issue, along with some amazing enticements (see Next Month for that).But the mag you are holding is not to be sniffed at, as we've got a staggering amount of news, spanning the major European game show in London, to the world's premier arcade game showcase in Japan. Snatching the first full preview of Virtual On is something we're particularly proud of — including the first two-player mode pictures. Lastly, to PJ, one of MEAN MACHINES most faithful adherents (and no mean artist), good luck and keep the faith.





GUS

WHO'S THE MAN AT NiGHTS?

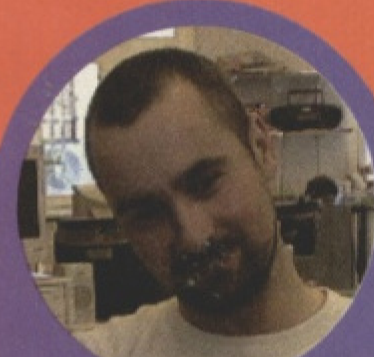
Probably the greatest score challenge game ever, NiGHTS offers an irresistable challenge which we'd like you Saturn warriors to pick up. We want scores! Send in your overall scores for each dream and best links for each course (they'll be in Dream Data). However, there's a catch. Your must be achieved with the correct boss for that dream, not your favourtie! So that's Gillwing for Spring Valley, Puffy for Splash Garden, Gulpo for Mystic Forest, Clawz for Frozen Bell, Jackle for Soft Museum and Reala for Stick Canyon . We'll start printing a league next month, and the grand winner will be in line for something really, really special. Trust us.





GAME OVER, YEAH!

We're saying goodbye to some familiar faces this month, as Claire, Marcus and Dan all bid MEAN MACHINES a fond farewell. Good riddance, we say.



GUS

Claire's departure means that the longest-serving member of the team is now something of an elder statesman figure. And the message from the bunker is that we are winning the war. "The desertion of my generals bothers me little," sneers Angus. "The punishment for deserters is execution. I shall be handling it personally." Gus has big plans for the future of the redesigned MEAN MACHINES, and isn't at all fazed by the current changes in staff. Reports of his recent erratic behaviour have been exaggerated. "That vacuum cleaner was asking for it," he growls. "And that's not a twitch – I've just had something in my eye recently." So, as the age of a brand new MEAN MACHINES dawns, what are Gus's hopes and intentions for the UK's flagship Sega title? "Lemon meringue pantyhose."



CLAIRE

An era has drawn to a close – after more than three years designing MEAN MACHINES SEGA, Claire Coulthard is waving goodbye. "I'm going to miss the magazine a lot," she sniffs, "but I've got a smart new job on top girls' mag It's Bliss so I'll be able to blag loads of clothes and lipstick and stuff. That should keep my pecker up if I ever get depressed." When Claire started on the UK's top Sega mag, she was part of a team that included such legendary names as Oz Brown, Rad Automatic and Jaz Rignall. "I've got a lot of happy memories, and I met my boyfriend (Sega Saturn Magazine's Dave Kelsall) when I was working here. It's been fun!" Before she breaks a thousand hearts, Claire has a message... "I'd like to say a big goodbye to everyone and blow you all a big kiss. Ta da!"



MARCUS

"When Claire told me she was resigning I decided I just couldn't face coming into the office if she wasn't here," says Marcus. "So I resigned as well. This is my last issue of MEAN MACHINES – I'm going to work for Titan Books as the new editor of Star Wars Magazine. It's going to be smart." Marcus joined the mag as deputy editor last summer. "It's time for a change – MEAN MACHINES is going to be revamped from the next issue and some new people should help give the whole thing a kick up the bum. Before I go, both Claire and I would lile to say a big thank you to Mark at Sega. Ta!" There is just one more thing... "Well, I suppose I ought to come clean," he confesses. "It's me that writes the silly little 'personality boxes' on the editorial pages." The mystery's solved. So who's writing this then?

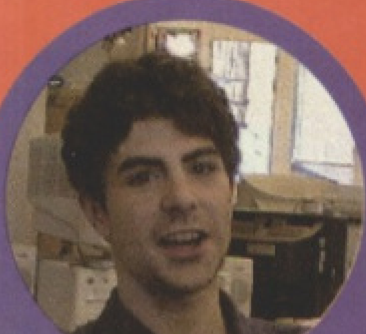


CAK CORNER!



Contrary to what you may have heard, the Megadrive is still alive and well this month, as Sonic 3D testifies. We've reached the sixth generation of Megadrive games (Toy Story, Sonic 3D) and Sega have performed miracles with 16bit hardware that we never even dreamed were possible. But it wasn't always like this. Cast your mind back to the release of the Megadrive in 1990 and the original line up of software: Ghouls'n'Ghosts – amazing!, Golden Axe – arcade perfect, Altered Beast – er, Cack! That's right, Sega's first ever coin-op conversion was a shambling travesty of a 2D beat 'em up that was an insult to both Sega and the coin-op original. The 'morph into an animal' gameplay was incredibly poor, and malformed sprites moved with all the grace of Stephen Hawking trying to tapdance. A worthy entry into the corner that some call Cak.





NICK

"I'm definitely not leaving," asserts Nick. That's a relief. And talking of relief, Nick's perks have been of an above average quality recently. "Yeah," he wriggles in his seat. "I met Joanne Guest at the ECTS show. She was shaking her thang in the Acclaim cabaret, looking really fit. I spotted this vision of loveliness having a quick fag behind the stand so I asked her to sign my copy of MEAN MACHINES." What did she write? "Next to the picture of me she wrote 'Phwooaarr, sexy dude. Love, Joanne Guest.' After that she asked me if she could come back to my place. I had to say no, however." Why – because you were partying all night or because you already had a hot chick waiting? "Er, well, my mum says I'm not allowed to have girls in my room."

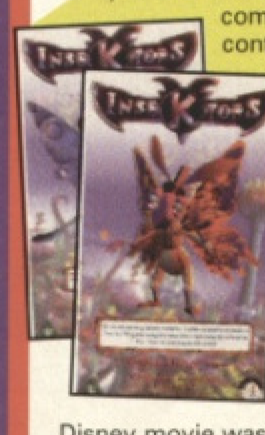


DAN

The MEAN MACHINES migration continues with Mr Jevons, who's barely been here long enough to leave. "I just couldn't stand it any longer," he grumbles. "No, actually I've had an offer I can't refuse – I'm going to work on GameFan magazine in the US of A." Dan, who's swapping Farringdon for Beverly Hills, was initially attracted by the superb transfer package, exciting opportunities and sheer prestige of the job. "But then I thought sod that – I'm going for the beach and the babes!" Dan's perfecting a Lord Snooty-type persona to amuse his American colleagues (in fact he's been working on it for about 22 years) and is banking on breaking into the movies before Christmas. He's already packed a crowbar and a pair of wirecutters. Toodle-pip Dan – it's been a grin.

INSECTORS GIVEAWAY!

Insektors is the psychedelic computer-animated show that charts the chucklesome adventures of a bunch of insects, butterflies and beetles. Each story is about another battle in the war between the Verigreens who live in the lucious Flower City and the malicious Kruds who live on the dark side of the Black Planet. Apart from top characters like Draffsack, Godfrey and Queen Catheter, what really makes this show is the gobsmacking computer animation. Insektors is back on the telly in October, but Channel 4 Video have given us Volumes One and Two of their new Insektors tapes to give away to the winners of our latest compo. Each tape contains a bunch of episodes and is on sale now at £9.99, but you could be among the five winners who'll pick up Volumes 1 & 2 for free if you answer this question correctly. Which recent Disney movie was entirely computer animated?



Put your answer on the back of a sealed-down envelope or postcard and send it to CREEPY CRAWLIES at the editorial address.

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Special thanks to: Sega for the party and Mark for goodies. Alison for Wild 9's stuff so prompt and so sexy.

EDITORIAL HQ: EMAP Images Ltd, Priory Court, 30-32 Farringdon Lane, London EC1R 3AU
CRIMESTOPPERS: 0171-972 6700
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PRINTING BY: Cooper Clegg
COLOUR: Sarah-Jane Leavey and Sarah Best
DISTRIBUTION: BBC Frontline
PRINTED IN THE UK

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Back issues UK: £3.50 each
Back issues, rest of world: £4.99 each

And now we go to bed.

NEWS

THE SHOW GOES ON

ECTS (European Computer Trade Show) is the games industry's traditional bunfight, held twice a year in April and September. Show reports in MEAN MACHINES are an almost as ingrained ritual, with the best and worst on show up for inspection. This ECTS at London's Olympia was clearly the biggest yet, spilling into a new hall, but it certainly wasn't the most exciting, with most of the good stuff on show being titles MEAN MACHINES has covered for release this Christmas. Also traditional is 'lies, damned lies and release schedules'. Many companies are prone to making outrageous claims about the number of games they'll have out within the next two 'quarters' and this show is no exception, with plenty of sheepish explanations for the non-arrival of games we were promised yonks ago. Still this is ECTS.

SONIC IS DEAD! LONG LIVE SONIC!

SONIC ???

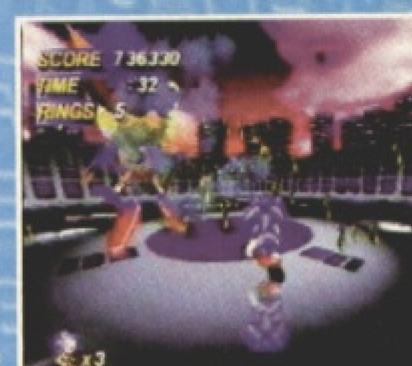
BY SONIC TEAM

SATURN

RELEASE 1997

ORIGIN: JAPAN

Sonic X-treme is, as Michael Jackson would put it, His-tory. Sega have 'suspended' the project indefinitely, which should see a release, as our insider put it, when Hell freezes over. The official explanations are vague and on the lines of assessing the game within the context of Sega's other software coming up for release, but it has been an open secret since E3 that some influential people in Japan were unhappy with the project, saying it failed to capture the spirit of the previous Megadrive titles. Yuji Naka, sonic's creator and the producer of NiGHTS, could hardly be made to speak well of it in interviews, and he may have had a hand in the decision to 'can' the project.







But even as one Sonic kicks it, another rises from the ashes and almost at the same time Sega announce that the Megadrive title, reviewed in this issue as Sonic 3D, will be converted to Saturn and, blimey, will be out before Christmas! A list of upgrade features include polygonal Sonic, texture-mapped environments, 'climate' features, new bonus stages and 'red book' audio (ie the music's on CD) were announced to go with it.

If this doesn't sound like the Sonic title to inspire you then, 'ecky thump, ANOTHER Sonic game started appearing on the Net just days after that! This is a separate project to Sonic 3D, with the direct involvement of Yuji Naka, and rumoured to use a 3D engine similar to NiGHTS. Sega have confirmed the game exists and slate it for a 1997 release, with the intention it squares up to the best Playstation and N64 software out then. So farewell, Sonic X-Treme, but in all honestly, good riddance too.



MEAN MACHINES' newshounds have cast their net far and wide this month for news and gossip from Britain's foremost coders and Japan's celebrity arcade developers. Sports, RPGs, big naff-off coin-op machines: all here.

KEY

competition · new game · japan news · tipped for the top · exclusive news · film news · news update · arcade conversion · gossip · british development

CALL OF THE WILD

WILD 9

BY SHINY

SATURN

RELEASE APRIL '97

ORIGIN: USA

The creative team behind Earthworm Jim are back! Shiny Entertainment have begun to release details of Wild 9, their first original Saturn title, which is scheduled for release in Spring next year. Wild 9 is an entirely new development, all-new characters and scenario and a custom game engine which is allowing Shiny to create a complete 3-D world for their mad platformer.



The central character is Wex, a young space dude who crash lands in a distant solar system. Wex's nemesis is Karn, a vast face of evil the size of two football pitches which hangs suspended from the roof of a monstrous palace at the other end of the galaxy. Wex has to travel across nine stages to confront Karn, joining forces with eight other space rangers who make up the Wild 9 team. These characters currently exist as vivid illustrations drawn by Shiny's graphic artists.

The game also boasts, 'the most powerful weapon ever seen in a console game', an innovative device Wex discovers called the 'rig'. This takes the form of a power glove and winding snake attachment, that winds itself around Wex in rather unsettling fashion. The rig is designed as a flexible piece of weaponry that will reveal the true extent of its power as the player becomes more adept. At the moment, we are aware of a creature who dwells inside it known as Bangus, who becomes an ally for Wex throughout the adventure.

Graphically, the game is in the earliest imaginable stage, with Shiny saying all the work to date has gone on creating a startling new game engine, that displays a platform environment in true 3D and will enable the game to store 60,000 separate animations! (Jim 2, by comparison, used just 3,000). The brief video demonstration of what Wild 9 should be capable of was more than a little titillating, and should give certain other platform game programmers something to chew on.

Wild 9's team claim the game will have all the humour and playability of the Jim games, while exploiting the 32-bit hardware to the full and using the capacity offered by CD. Shiny also received loads of compliments for its other title, MDK, which is currently being programmed for PC CD.





GRANDIOSE

GRANDIA

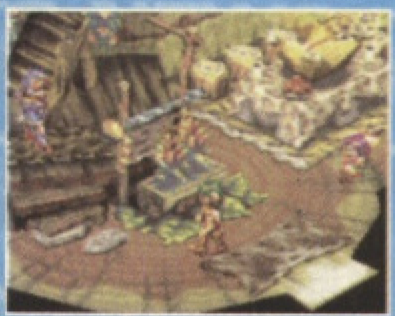
BY GAME ARTS

SATURN

RELEASE 1997

ORIGIN: JAPAN

Described as the 'second-biggest pull of the Tokyo Game Show' (remember VF3 was there), Grandia is an RPG that's getting attention in a country where you get an RPG in your cornflakes every morning. But Grandia has been three years in development and, unusually for an RPG, looks the dog's Bs. Game Arts are coordinating this massive project, with the game consisting of, yoiks, several hundred render locations. Unlike other RPGs, these are displayed in true 3D — everything in the game is polygonal, so the player can zoom in to an extraordinary level of close-up detail, or play the game from a bird's eye view with an entire town miniaturised. The Japanese are going ape over Grandia and can hardly wait until next year for it. Nor, for that matter, can we.





OHH! ME TACKLE

JONAH LOMU RUGBY

BY CODEMASTERS

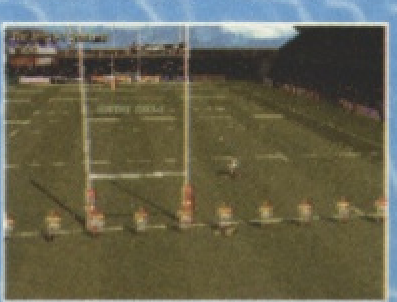
SATURN

RELEASE EARLY 1997

ORIGIN: UK

Codemasters sign another star to their Sportsmaster label by scooping Jonah Lomu to endorse their new Rugby game, due next February. The 3D sports simulation features four stunning light-sourced stadiums and 32 of the sport's top international teams. Jonah Lomu is a joint development between Codemasters and Rage software, who previously coded a rugby game for the Megadrive a few years back. The new codies game boasts an intelligent camera viewing system that zooms in on the rough and tumble elements of Rugby: mauls, rucks and scrums. Sophisticated AI means that the game cannot be won by the human player alone — using the skills of the rest of the computer-controlled team is essential, yet Codies claim it will use an 'arcade' approach so that detailed knowledge of the rules of Rugby is not necessary. The game also hopes to make the most of the controlled violence that makes the game the world's second most popular team spectator sport. The 6' 4", 19 stone bulk of Jonah himself will probably figure in that.





LET'S PLAY BALL

JOHN MADDEN '97

BY EA

SATURN

RELEASE LATE '96

ORIGIN: USA



One of the landmark games of the 16-bit era, John Madden's football, is finally making the leap to Saturn. John Madden's is traditionally the beginning and end in American Football, featuring all 100 teams of the US NFL, and all their details, down to underpant size. Now, records of teams even go back to the 1950s and 60s! Players (there can be 1-4) jump between players on the team, but as much of the game is given over to strategic play by selecting 'plays' from a series of sub-menus. Any 32-bit game is incomplete without a fancy new 3D engine, and Madden's 97 glories in its 'iso-cam', where the variety of field level and aerial views allow you to play the game in different ways, including camera panning for on-screen passing.



SPORT IT OUT

NHL '97, PGA '97, NBA LIVE '97, FIFA '97

BY EA

SATURN

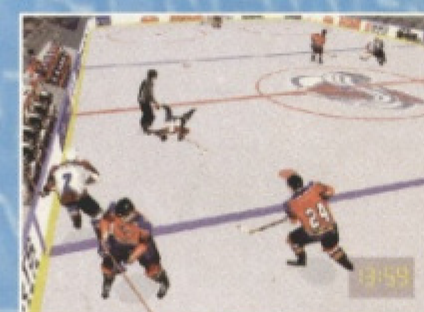
RELEASE 96-97

ORIGIN: USA



EA Sports — once great, now aiming to be a force in games once again with a raft of annual updates of their classic sports licenses. All of these, Fifa '97 apart, are first timers on the Saturn, since EA sat out last christmas. Fifa will undoubtedly be the main attraction (both Fifa '96 and Fifa '95 sold more than any other UK title last year. The main aim has been to improve the 3D engine, animation and player AI, all of which came in for some stick last year. Other new features are team and player attributes (Vinnie Jones will behave accordingly); 5-aside indoor tournies, and a high-speed game option to finally dispense with Fifa's reputation for plodding gameplay. Other titles utilise the same level of detail and motion captured player animations.





VECTOR MAD

TEMPEST 2000

BY INTERPLAY

SATURN

RELEASE DECEMBER

ORIGIN: UK



15 years ago, Atari made the best coin-ops. Tempest is one classic, largely forgotten until hippy programming genius Jeff Minter created an update for Atari's piss-poor Jaguar system last year, which proved to be the only worthwhile game on the machine. Now that game is due for a surprise conversion onto Saturn. Tempest is set on an infinite collection of 3D webs, with the player controlling a tiny polygonal craft riding it at the near end. Enemies advance from the far end, and the game's simple aim is to blast them before they make it. Graphically the game is minimalist, but captures the coolness of the coin-op with its mesmeric, compulsive blasting action. If the conversion is halfway decent, this should be a compulsory crimble purchase for serious gamesplayers.



THE X-FILE

X2

BY TEAM 17

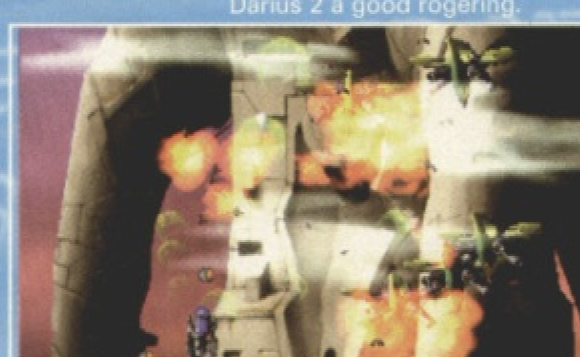
SATURN

RELEASE DECEMBER

ORIGIN: UK

Labour-voting programmers to a man, Team 17 are producing X2, a homage to the type of blaster striking miners must have killed time on during't Pit Strike against Maggie Thatcher. It's a 32-bit, bells and whistles (or should that be whippets?) sequel to Project X, Team 17's blaster on the Amiga (ugh!). Vertical and horizontal stages, ceaseless action, fancy power-ups, huge bosses. Should give Darius 2 a good rogering.









LESSON IN MARKETING NO. 1

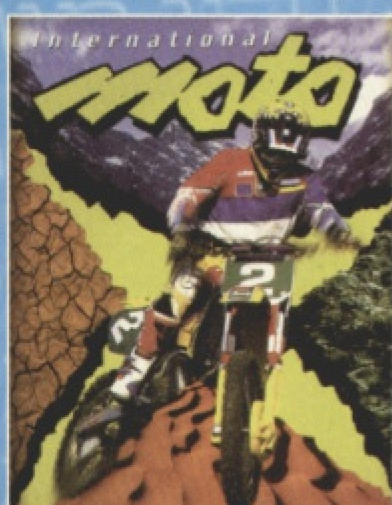
You are the PR guy for a company making joypads. You want the mags to print a picture of your new pad. But MEAN MACHINES don't like printing joypad pictures. You dream up a cunning plan. Flatter the mag's editor by taking a picture of the joypad and the mag, then write a little personal press release. Ploy works: The Tecnoplus Megadrive pad is only £9.99, has six buttons and auto-fire mode. Buy it kids!

JUNIOR KICKSTART

INTERNATIONAL MOTO
BY TIME WARNER
SATURN
RELEASE EARLY 1996
ORIGIN: USA

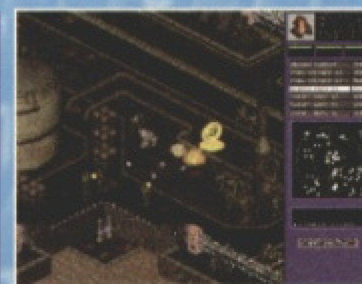


Time Warner add to their backlog of unreleased Saturn titles with a motocross game. The intercontinetal pretext of the game comes from having 30 separate muddy circuits set across the globe. If that were not enough, it's the first Saturn racer to feature a track editor so players can muck up their own tracks 'in seconds'. The split-screen bike-based bash is being constructed by Graftgold, a respected team of brit developers who made their name in the 80s.

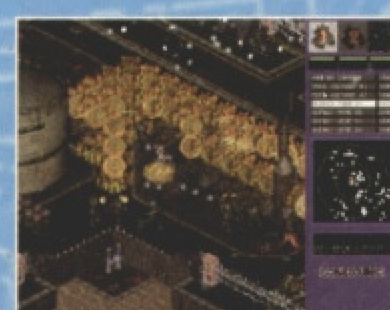


LUNATIC FRINGE

BEDLAM
BY GTI
SATURN
RELEASE NOVEMBER
ORIGIN: UK



Bedlam offers strategy and action in equal measure in an isometric adventure that should grab the attention of any Syndicate fans. Programmed by Mirage (creators of the infamous Rise of the Robots duology), Bedlam is wrapped in a rather clichéd plot idea, based on machines taking over the earth and some remaining survivors (in this case merceneries) out to reclaim the planet. The idea is perked up by the totally destructive nature of the game: thousands of enemies and five highly inflammable environments: and the fact you can play tactics by controlling three separate operatives simultaneously. Two years of work will culminate in our review, like next ish!



GOSSIP

It's not Streets of Rage 3, but the new Core fighting game is looking awesome in any case. It mixes the coolness of a Virtua Fighter-style game with the freedom of movement associated with scrolling beat 'em ups. There are already some spectacular sequences with cars careening into car parks and hoodlums spilling out. Core's other fighter, Ninja is looking equally good, with a spider nest level showing off the silky smooth 3D and excellent animation. Sega have picked up Amok and Scorcher, the long-awaited Scavenger titles look as if they might just have been worth it. Whether Heart of Darkness will be is another matter — the project has been put back again, to Spring '97! They should take a leaf out of powerhouse Probe which is handling Die Hard Trilogy on Saturn — the Fox interactive title is just weeks off completion. We'll also be travelling to Probe this month to see a top secret project, Condemned, for Acclaim. Capcom are working on a Streetfighter vs X-Men arcade game. Fans of Shining in the Darkness from Sonic on Megadrive should be delighted to hear of Shining of the Holy Ark, a 3D RPG due next year. Plus Treasure have 5 titles planned the first being the action strategy Silhouette Mirage.

CONTRA-VERSY

CONTRA
BY KONAMI
SATURN
RELEASE EARLY 1997
ORIGIN: JAPAN

Konami are putting everything into the 32-bit version of Contra, which was a massive hit (AKA Probotector) on the Megadrive and SNES. The new versions are coming on apace and feature the same mad-marines-on-the-rampage action, now viewing shoot em up levels from a whole range of different angles. The graphics are being worked on at the highest level — including the husband and wife team who designed Castlevania's. All the original mad bosses are also included in the new version. We've tied up an exclusive of this for the future.





EAT OUR SHORTS

SEGA ADS
Sega have four TV ads planned pre-christmas. The NiGHTS and Worldwide Soccer ad are already airing, and will be followed by two more 'arcade conversion' teasers.

CLASSIFIED
GT are releasing Williams' arcade conversion Area 51, to be compatible with the Virtua Gun. It uses rendered sequences depicting an alien infestation of the infamous secret base, supposed site of the 'Rockwell Incident'.

VIPERS BUG
Sega Japan are recalling all copies of Fighting Vipers, released at the beginning of September, because of a bug. Owners of the import version will probably have experienced the inexplicable memory-wiping error that occurs. We advise you to wait for a bug-free PAL version.

IRON WILL
Acclaim's next big game is Iron and Blood, a 3D polygon beat 'em up featuring fantasy characters straight out of Dungeons and Dragons. Acclaim boasts that it outperforms both VF2 and Tekken technically.

GOING BALLISTIC
Team 17 plan to add another pinball game to the Saturn's burgeoning collection with Ballistic. Four tables, ultra-realism and novel themes are all promised by the Manchesterford firm.

BREAKING POINT
There's a niche for a really good tennis game on Satun and Ocean are aiming to fill it with Breakpoint, a sports sim using motion captured players and commentary supplied by Chris Bailey, who does BBC Wimbledon apparently. Review soon.

NEW WORLD
Segaworld in the Trocadero is open, and MEAN MACHINES sampled it last month at a party thrown by Sega. There are six interactive rides, but more importantly, three Virtua Fighter 3 cabinets — the first in the UK.


POLICE HUNT TATTOOED MANIAC
POLICE YESTERDAY LAUNCHED A NATIONWIDE HUNT FOR A MAN THEY DESCRIBED AS 'HIGHLY DANGEROUS'.
THE MAN, said to be in his late teens or early twenties, went berserk in a video game store, karate chopping machines before he [illegible] first out of the [illegible]
The store manager said that the man had been playing Tekken2 on PlayStation, when he suddenly stripped to the waist - revealing his all-over body tattoos - screamed "Heihachi will avenge" before setting about his trail of destruction.
The public have been warned not to approach him.
SOON MY MASTERPIECE WILL BE COMPLETE
Pain will bring me closer to the father
THE SUPER-HUMAN PISTON ATTACK HAS LEFT ME WEAK BUT I WILL CONTINUE THE FIGHT - THE QUEST MUST CONTINUE,
THE FIGHT GOES ON
Beware Kazuya
鉄拳
FEEL NO PAIN
TEKKEN II HAS SHOWN THE WAY
HEIHACHI WILL AVENGE!
the sins of the son will be visited
A MEDAL FOR EACH VICTORY
a medal for each victory
I AM THE DEVIL SON KAZUYA
HEIHACHI WILL RETURN
HEIHACHI WILL AVENGE
MY BRAVERY WILL BE REWARDED
NO, I'M MORE INTENSE
THE MARK OF THE PISTON
PISTON PISTON
MY TROPHIES WILL SHOW MY COMRADES
SONY
PlayStation
DO NOT UNDERESTIMATE THE POWER OF PLAYSTATION
namco

CREAM OF SEGA

OFFICIAL CHARTS © ELSPA COMPILED BY CHART TRACK

Absolutely no points for working out what's topped the charts this month. As NiGHTS goes out, Sega think it may be their fastest-selling title ever. A fitting end to Cream of Sega as we know it, as from the next issue it ceases to exist! Don't worry, there will be plenty of chart action incorporated into our extended news section, with info on what's happening in Japan and the arcades, and of course, in your house.

HYPE CHART

[We're coming to get you!

1 (4)
FIGHTING VIPERS
These screenshots must be getting to you.

2 (2)
SOVIET STRIKE
You can't wait until November. There's going to be a revolution.

3 (5)
DAYTONA USA CCE
Now the readers' favourite.

4 (-)
VIRTUAL ON
Be excited, be very excited.

5 (-)
TOMB RAICER
A few more weeks and Lara will be in your palms.

KEEP 'EM COMING!

The mailbag for Cream of Sega is getting pretty impressive. But from next month we want you to send your entries to READERS CHARTS at the same address. Same info, mind, and the same chance of winning a prize for your chart prediction. The last Cream of Sega winner is Adam Greaves of Salford.

MY TOP THREE SATURN GAMES ARE:

____
____
____

I'M MOST LOOKING FORWARD TO:

____
____
____

I PREDICT THE MOST POPULAR GAME WILL BE:

____

NAME:
ADDRESS:

Send to: Reader's Chart, MEAN MACHINES SEGA, EMAP Images Ltd, Priory Court, 30-32 Farringdon Lane, London EC1R 3AU.

SALES CHART: SATURN

Chart Track's guide to the best-selling CDs.

1 (-)
NIGHTS(Sega)
The Sonic phenomenon swoops into steal this month's honours.

2 (-)
ALIEN TRILOGY (Acclaim)
The bitch looks more than capable of storming onto the bestseller list.

3 (-)
DESTRUCTION DERBY (Sega)
Too late! You lot didn't wait.

4 (-)
ATHLETE KINGS(Sega)
Another new entry! This is a serious shake up of the chart scene.

5 (-)
BUST A MOVE 2(Acclaim)
It's nice to see playability still stands for something.

6 (-)
DISCWORLD (Psygnosis)
There must have been games starvation about for all these new entries

7 (3)
SEGA RALLY (Sega)
AM3's masterpiece shows signs of slipping at last.

8 (4)
VIRTUA COP (Sega)
Who would thought this would still be Top Ten? Us.

9 (2)
LOADED (Gremlin)
Some people are still discovering this murder-fest for the first time.

10 (-)
FIFA '96(Sega)
Makes a reapperance, just before Fifa '97 makes its!

ELSPA

SALES CHART: MEGADRIVE

Chart Track's guide to 16-bit sales.

1 (9)
BRIAN LARA CRICKET '96 (Codemasters)
Cricket:Megadrive's salvation. Mother.

2 (2)
MICRO MACHINES 2 (Codemasters)
One and two in the chart. Impressive.

3 (4)
WORMS (Sega)
They manage to wriggle up a place on last month's showing.

4 (-)
FIFA '96 (EA)
Last year's biggest seller. But there's always some slowcoach.

5 (6)
SONIC AND KNUCKLES (Sega)
Your best bet until Sonic 3D arrives.

6 (-)
TAZMANIA:ESCAPE FROM MARS (Sega)
Escape from this game, more like.

7 (9)
MEGA BOMBERMAN (Sega)
Now this is a game. Give me this game.

8 (5)
TOY STORY (Sega)
The movie may be a memory, but the game's still frish.

9 (-)
DYNAMITE HEADDY (Sega)
Hurrah! Top ten at last.... after two years.

10 (-)
STREETS OF RAGE 2 (Sega)
These are the cut-price classics y'see. Great value.

ELSPA

OFFICE CHART SATURN

Mother knows best.

1 (-)
NIGHTS INTO DREAMS
It's still our favourite game. And will remain so.

2 (-)
STREETFIGHTER ZERO 2
Class conversion, believe us.

3 (-)
VIRTUAL ON
The tiny taste we've had has left us hungry for more.

4 (1)
FIGHTING VIPERS
Great. Apart from the bug that wipes your memory (import only).

5 (-)
BLAM:MACHINEHEAD
More than a pair of moist Y-fronts. Blam is one mean mother of a game.

READERS CHART SATURN

Free-thinking individuals.

1 (2)
SEGA RALLY
Firmly established as your fave.

2 (2)
VIRTUA FIGHTER 2
You love the gang, you f'in love 'em.

3 (3)
PANZER DRAGOON ZWEI
Once again, Panzer getting the credit it deserves.

4 (-)
ATHLETE KINGS
You played it, you loved it.

5 (-)
ULTIMATE MK3
The conversion went down well then, sir?

JAM
HO

Tokyo's JAMMA Show (Japanese Arcade Manufacturers) is the world's most prestigious trade event for new coin-ops. As arcade technology again pulls away from the level available in the home, it also represents the pinnacle of video game-tech. Our thanks to Warren Harrod, our man in Japan, for the materials that go with this report.



PICK 1

VIRTUA FIGHTER 3

Finished versions of Sega's flagship game of 1996 are now available to you, at least if you live in London. Surprisingly, Europe has scored ahead of the US, where VF3 is expected to be delayed until October. The presence of this awesome game dominated the show, as visitors got to grips with the two incredible new characters and witnessed some of the effects the Model 3 board is capable of. We'll have a full VF3 feature and arcade player's guide next issue.







PICK 4

STREET FIGHTER LEGENDS

Capcom have produced the first '3D Streetfighter' game in a fashion different to what most would have expected. There are only eight characters — and only four of these (Chun Li, Zangief, Ryu and Ken) come from the Streetfighter series. Streetfighter Legend (the title remains provisional) also uses a 3-Deformation graphics system to give its chunky polygon players depth. Features from the Zero games like Super Combos and finishes are there.





PICK 3

WAVE RUNNER

Jetski games have suddenly become all the rage, with this, Namco's Aqua Jet and Nintendo's Wave Racer for N64. Sega's entrant is easily the most impressive rendition of the sport, with sumptious Carribean backgrounds and characters as detailed in polygons as any previous Sega racing vehicle. Courses are constructed from tidal water areas running into lagoons and rivers. Ramps are placed around the course which players can use to perform aerial stunts for extra points. Sega's full cabinet uses a sit-down ski vehicle, whereas players of Namco's Aqua Jet stand.





PICK 2

GTI CLUB:COTE D'AZUR RACER

Konami is now determined to match Sega and Namco in arcade technology with a racing game that matches Model 2 spec, and there's a dynamite game concept in there too. GTI Club is best described as 'The Italian Job' made into a game. None the wiser? The name comes from a Michael Caine film from the Sixties where a gang of robbers run riot round an Italian city in Mini Coopers. That's exactly what's on offer in GTI Club, as your turbo-charged mini sends pedestrians diving and pavement cafe tables flying, before veering off the road and heading down stone steps. Hugely original and awesome to behold.





MMA
OT!





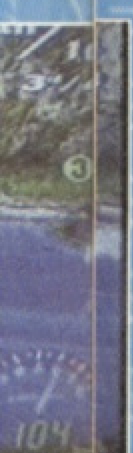
PICK 5
KONAMI 3DCG

Konami demonstrated their new 3D arcade board with a demo of a fighting game squarely in the VF3 mode, and its amazing power looks like rivalling Sega's, on paper at least. Konami 3DCG matches Model 3's 1 million polygons per second, hi-resolution and custom graphics effects. The demo showed fully modelled 3D fighting arenas, with changing climate effects ranging from lightning to rain – in realtime!









PICK 6
SEGA TOURING CAR CHAMPIONSHIP

The next ball-buster in Sega Model 2 racing is a bit of Daytona, a bit of Sega Rally, and will probably create a vogue for a new kind of arcade racer. The featured vehicles are custom high-performance cars, the tracks racing layouts of Indy style, the graphics smoother than anything else seen on Model 2. Although the level of detail may not impress more than Sega Rally, the frame rate is exceptional.

DEAD OR ALIVE
Tecmo are using Model 2 tech to produce their very VF2 beat 'em up. Not any more impressive than the E3 version, which was not very impressive.

GRADIUS 3D
Konami update their old scrolling space shooter series, Gradius, by putting it in polygon 3D. Looked earlier and shakier than their other efforts.

SEGA SUPER G
Sega's first stab at a ski-ing game (probably goaded on by Namco's Alpine Racer 1&2). The game is gutsier and classier than either of those, with incredibly fast update and a better independent ski control system, so true parallel and snow-ploughing is possible.

PUZZLE BOBBLE 3
The predictable return of the itchingly addictive Bust-a-Move series was actually Taito's high point — their Fighting Vipers wannabe, Fighter's Impact, looked distinctly shaky, and completely unoriginal.

SUPER TAG BATTLE
SNK show no sign of stemming the flow of Neo Geo 2-D Fighters. Tag Battle is just the latest in a line from King of Fighters to Samurai Shodown and Real Bout. And the JAMMA crowd continue to lap them up.

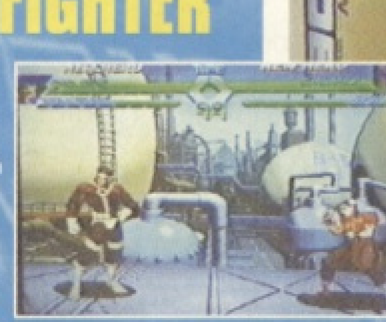
DANCING EYES
There's always one piece of Japanese mischief-making to apologise for. This year it's a puzzle game that's a take on the hoary old 'painter' game, Amidar. A selection of Arabian princesses are trapped in various bottles and jars, and you have to release them by surrounding the segments. They'll reward you with a fully textured-mapped light-sourced belly dance!





PICK 7
X-MEN VS STREETFIGHTER

Only weeks after the first Net rumours — playable versions of the mad (some would say ludicrously mismatched) beat 'em up. XVSSF utilises Capcom's new board to animate monstrous sized X-Men enemies against Capcom's own cartoon super heroes. Playing a game that pits close combat fighting against flashy fantasy moves can only be described as weird, but it's done with Capcom style.





PROJECT
VIRTUAL ON

PUBLISHER
SEGA

INITIATED
EARLY '96

RELEASE
LATE '96

FORMAT
SATURN

DEVELOPERS
AM3

The most successful coin-op of 1996 in Japan: Virtual On Cyber Troopers takes gladitorial combat to a battlefield beyond the stars.

It's good when it's one-on-one. Gaming that is. Head to head gaming is as old as the hills, well as old as Atari Combat, the charming cartridge that came with the VCS. Virtual On is basically an update of the old concept of lining up your tank and taking your best shot. Now, natch, it's huge robot against huge robot with the latest armoury of guided missiles and smart bombs with eye-popping kaleidoscopic explosions.













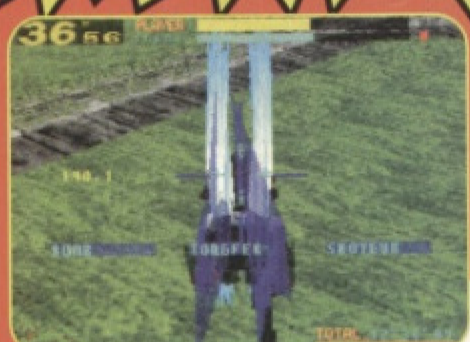
JAPS ARE MAD FOR IT

The conversion of AM3's arcade Virtual On is of massive interest to the Japanese. In early '96 it was King of the arcades there, and player's guides and speculation on the Saturn version have rarely been out of the Japanese mags. The Brits may catch on belatedly, purely on the basis of the quality of the conversion, which is shaping up to be pretty awesome. Echoing many of the games in the Virtua series, players are given a choice of distinct character robots, each with custom weapons and styling. These range from a shapely 'lady' VR. Fei Yen with a heart-shaped 'love beam', to the lumbering Bel Bas Bow which dispenses most woe at close range with its huge hydraulic arms.













VIRTUAL ON
CYBER TROOPERS





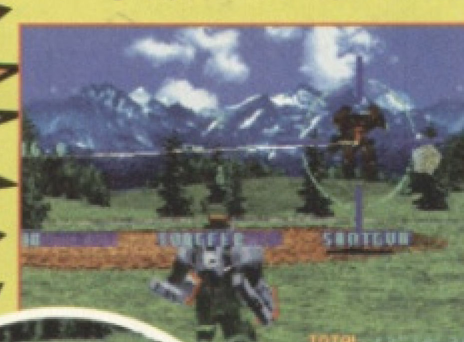




TAKE YOUR BEST SHOT

The game scenario is simple. Two robots face each other in a square arena, with a few blocks offering limited cover. There's complete freedom to move around, and movement is high speed. The aim is to ambush your opponent from the best vantage point, discharging your weapons, sidestepping his retaliation. Your three main attacks work differently at very close range, or from the air, which is a real position of strength. Weapons need to charge between uses, adding an element of restraint and strategy to the proceedings. Special moves, performed by joystick dexterics are the preserve of the seasoned player.



















THE 'BORGS

Eight robots for you to take into the fray. The game's cutscreens depict them as gargantuan, served by a battalion of tiny human technicians.

MBV-04-G TEMJIN

The all-rounder Virtual Roid, with the benefit of speed, good armour and a respectable complement of weapons. Almost the 'Ryu' or 'Akira' of Virtual On.
WEAPONS: Rifle * Beam Sword * Bomb



HBV-05-E RAIDEN

The VR with the single most powerful weapon: Raiden's laser. He also has the advantage of the best armour. Maneurvreability is his weakness.
WEAPONS: Bazooka * Ground Bomb * Laser



TRV-06N-K VIPER II

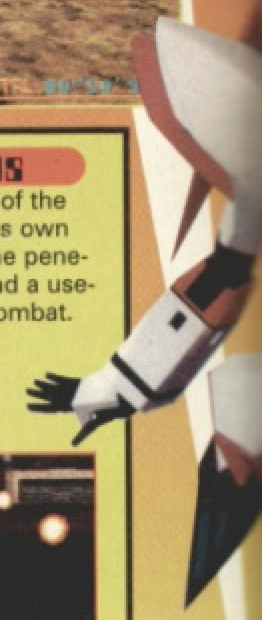
Structurally, Viper II is a lighter, less armoured vesion of the Temjin 'Roid. Consequently, jumping height and dash speed are much enhanced. It also has one of the best all-round weapons complements.
WEAPONS:Vulcan * 7-way missile * Homing Beam



HBV-10-B DORKAS

A scaled-down version of the Raiden robot, but with its own advantages, including the penetrating Phalanx attack and a usefulness at close range combat.
WEAPONS: Fireball * Hammer * Phalanx





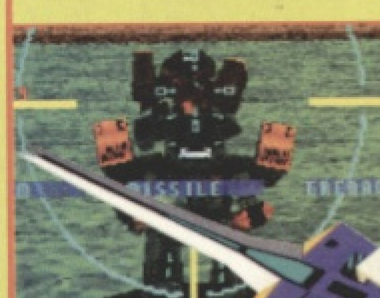
MBV-09-C APHARMD

Temjin again provides the structural model, though Apharmd is a speed-boosted model, and armed with an unparalleled close-range sword weapon: the Tongfer. Getting any joy from Apharmd's other weapons requires excellent aiming.
WEAPONS: Shotgun * Bomb * Tongfer



SAV-07-D BELGDOR

Raiden, again without the high-level of armour, but increased mobility. Belgdor's homing missile, most effective from the air, is a significant factor in long-range battles, but it's high mounting leads to stability problems!
WEAPONS: Grenade * Napalm * Homing Missile



GRV-14-A FEI-YEN

The inevitable 'lady robo' Fei Yen is predictably lighter, weaker and more shapely than the other VRs, but noticeably more agile. She also features a unique Hyper mode activated when her energy falls below half — her attacks become twice as powerful.
WEAPONS:Hand Beam * Bowgun * Heart Beam



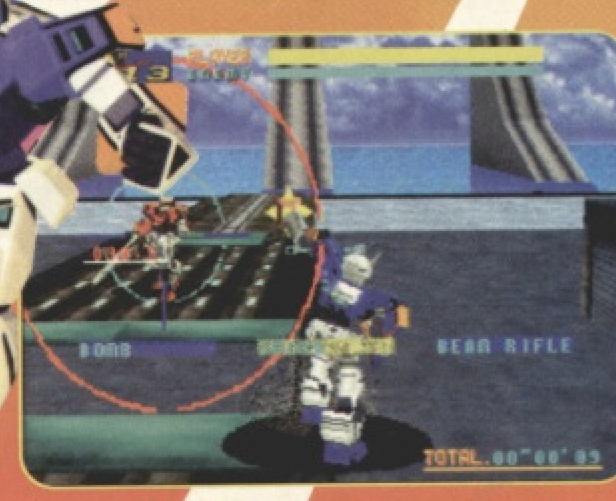
NBV-13-M1 BAL-BAS-BOW

Built differently to all others, Bal-Bas-Bow uses a levitational movement system and as such is a struggle to control. Ordnance is weak, but homes in effectively on opponents. The VR is vulnerable at close range and the runt of the VO litter.
WEAPONS: Ring Laser * Floating Mines * Hand Bit











PICK UP STICKS

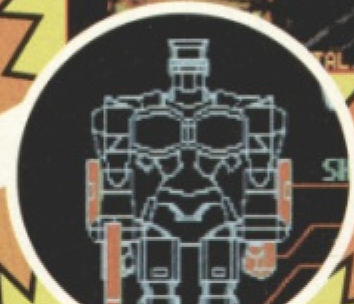


An interesting facet of the conversion has been handling the arcade's distinctive double joystick controls. The elaborate coin-op cabinet has two analogue sticks for full maneouvreability. Firstly, the joypad controls have been sensibly arranged and are more than adequate, although the use of every button makes it a demanding game to play. But purists will be heartened by the special joystick designed by AM3, which emulates the coin-op method, and will be available as a game and controller pack. After NiGHTS, this seems to becoming something of a fashion.

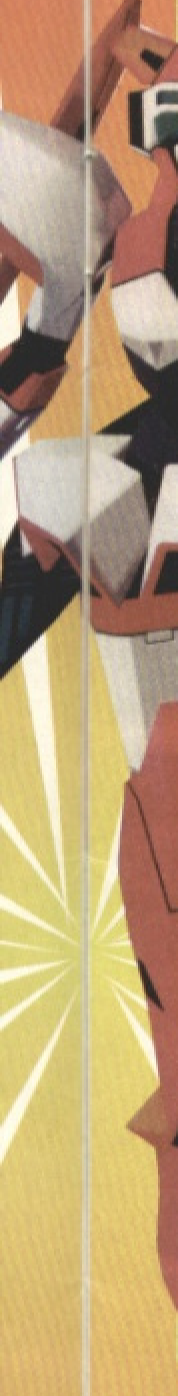














SPLIT PERSONALITIES

Two-player action is integral to Virtual On, and this is recognised in the able split-screen mode, which looks like maintaining the standard of the single-player game in terms of speed and playability. There are other plans afoot for interaction, though. The first of these is a link-up mode using that elusive cable. Later, a network version should become available through the modem-based Netlink system, due in the early new year.

















WORK IN PROGRESS

PROJECT
DAYTONA USA CCE

PUBLISHER
SEGA

INITIATED
Early 96

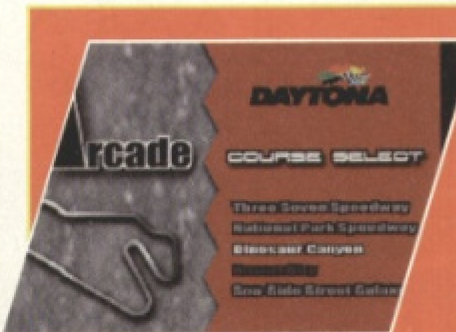
RELEASE
November 96

FORMAT
SATURN

DEVELOPERS
AM R&D Dept 2

Never has so much crap been said about a conversion as has been said about AM2's Saturn conversion of Daytona USA. For just about every bit of praise the game received, there was a moan: "it was only one-player", "the clipping was bad", "there were only three tracks", "the music was naff".
MEAN MACHINES was not amongst the detractors. The game scored 94% and, while the shortcomings were dutifully brought to your attention, we never lost sight of the fact that AM2 produced an excellent piece of gameplay. As for the main argument, that the backgrounds popped-up in an ugly fashion, fair comment. But that's not a weakness of Saturn, it's down to the wide-view and open space that are part of Daytona. You can make a racing game that cleverly disguises that with tunnels and lots of sharp bends, but the whole point of Daytona is the open road.
Nevertheless, Sega, particularly Sega Europe did not want to leave it at that. Hence Daytona USA Championship Circuit Edition. A mouthful of a title, so you'l forgive us if we just call it Daytona CCE from now on.
Daytona CCE's team (drawn partly from the Sega Rally convertors) has taken these complaints on board and produced an update that brings new tracks, smarter graphics and a two-player split-screen mode. The game will also have in-built compatibility with the forthcoming Netlink device, which will eventually provide multi-player network gaming for Saturn. You'll have it all before Christmas.

DAYTO



New tracks, new danger, new maps. See the Desert City track is not yet available.



This is national park speedway. It's only slightly more complex than the 777 'Indy' track. So bomb it, basically.



A LA MODE

The new Daytona filches a lot of the excellent options from Sega Rally, including the ghost modes, which allow you to race against a car which represents your best time trial times.

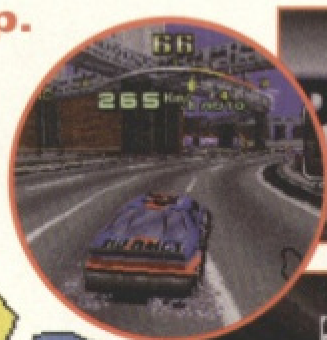


POP UP STORY

Daytona CCE's team are working on reducing the occasions that large chunks of scenery graphics suddenly appear in the foreground. This is still an ongoing process but they have had some success so far, with elements like the sailing ship on the Sega Galaxy track that once used to appear like the Marie Celeste!



It's almost 18 months since AM2 released Daytona USA in Japan. Time to give the old slapper a scrub-up.

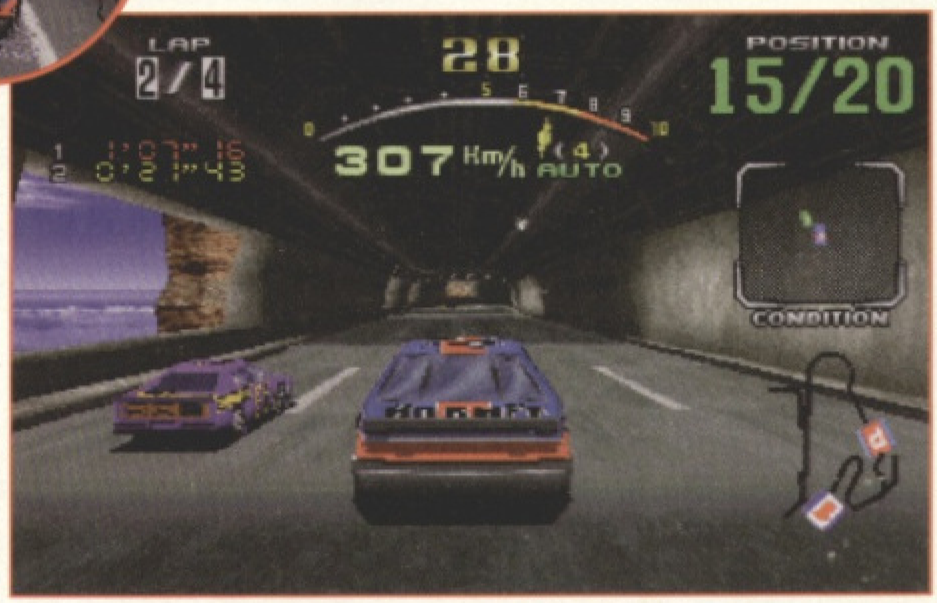


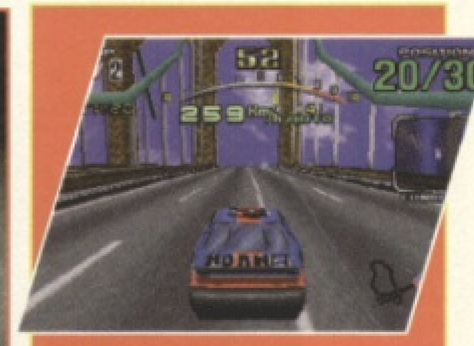


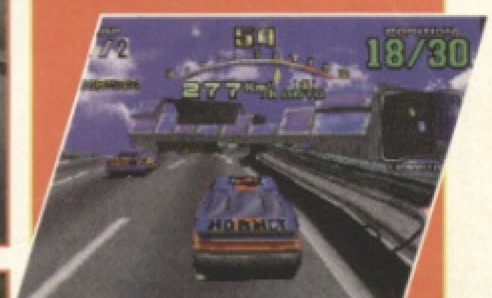
FAIRGROUND ATTRACTION



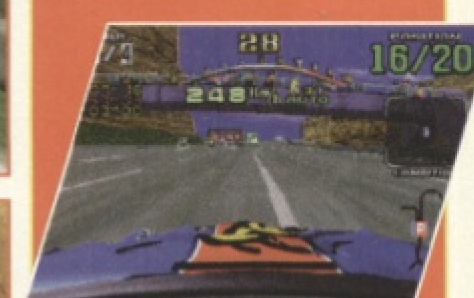
One of the two new tracks is operational. It's set alongside a Theme Park with a huge Ferris Wheel and rollercoaster providing trackside scenery. There's also a nasty chicane which provides a point for potential pile-ups. This track seems slotted between the easy Speedway track and moderately difficult dinosaur track in terms of challenge.





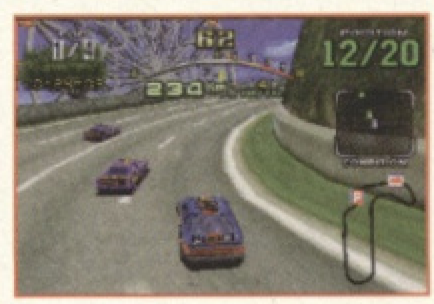


The work on the old tracks is cosmetic at heart.

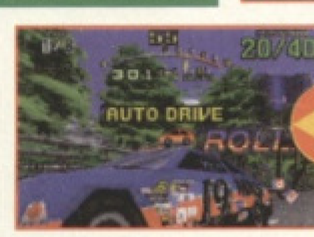


Dinosaur Valley still has the open-air Little Chef services offering Jubilee pancakes.

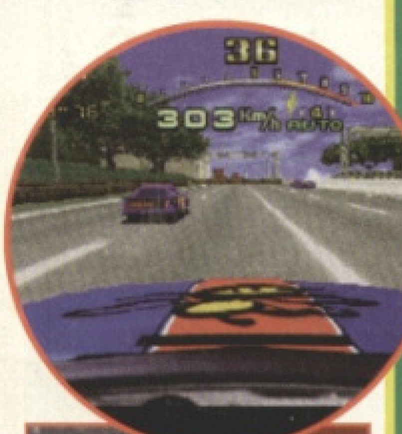
ROLLING REMIX



Re-using Daytona's distinctively cheesy music was not an option, and just to make sure we don't get another dose of the J-pops, Sega UK are handling that task themselves with their in-house musician. Don't despair, fromage-friends, as he's remixed the original tunes as dance tracks, also enlisting the services of a girl from Sega's Accounts department who can sing a bit, who does the classic 'Daytona, let's go away'. She is, in fact, silky smooth! There's also new house and drum-and-bass tracks for the new circuits.











MAKEOVER

Work has gone into lots of little cosmetic improvements which Daytona fans should notice. These include:

1 Adding a transparent glass screen around the stands on 777 Speedway.

2 Increasing the resolution on scenery texture maps — the best example of this is the fossil wall on the Dinosaur track, which is much more legible, and the Sonic wall.

3 Creating a reflection on the rear window of the car that reacts to its movement.

4 New spectacular angles for viewing crashes, with the camera rotating the car.





COMING NEXT

We can understand if you're still not sure if you want a Daytona CCE alongside your battered box for Daytona USA. Next month you will know as we review it.





BY: VIRGIN

GAME TYPE: ACTION

1-2 PLAYERS

PRICE: £44.99

RELEASE: NOVEMBER

COMPLETE

GRID runner

'Futuresport' first emerged as a concept in the sixties, and provided lots of opportunity for 70s movies to dress actors up in Kit Kat wrappers and trundle around steel-floored arenas on roller-skates. How we laughed when said concepts were predicted to replace football and cricket. But someone must have been inspired — we've got Gladiators. Sharron Davies is the future!

Virgin does not have the world's 38th sexiest woman (according to FHM) to front its new highly technical futuresport puzzler. It has you and a mate, in a game of intergalactic tig. Grid Runner's 60 zones work on a single simple precept, but get gradually more complicated by the environment and the increasing cunning of your deviant opposition.



AARON SPELLING

Players augment their natural abilities with supernatural ones. There are a range of spells employed including teleportation (useful) and creating bridges (very useful) as well as offensive weapons that slow your opponent. These powers drain your magic reserves, which must be replenished on a trolley-dashing bonus maze.



JOHNNY NO MATES

You may have figured that Grid Runner is designed for two players. And indeed, the game accomodates them both with a split-screen window mode. But people shunned because they were once found to have skids, will be delighted with the range of computer characters (space monster types) who have defined characters and remarkably sneaky Artificial Intelligence.







GRIDDLED

Grid Runner is a series of suspended mazes, starting as simple affairs and growing into multi-screen labyrinths. The landscape is laid out in square tiles, with bridges, teleporters, barriers and speed ups as features dotted around the layouts. The key elements are the flags, which each player is trying to possess.

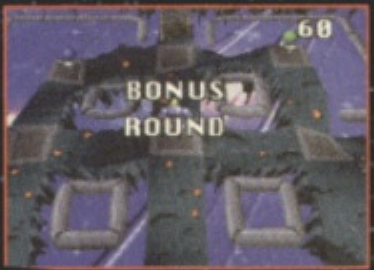


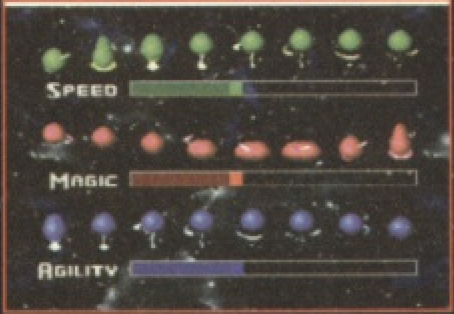




CHASE ME! CHASE ME!

Grid Runner is one-on-one tag. On each round, the competitors are set a target of flags to possess. This is done by simply touching it, changing its colour. However, one of the players is always 'IT'. The 'IT' player cannot change flags, so the other player has, as Henry Kelly would say, 'control of the game'. All the 'IT' player can do is 'infect' his rival by touching him, instantly switching status.












I'VE GOT THIS EARLY MORNING ROUTINE.
I CLEAN MY FACE WITH OXY DAILY WASH EVERY MORNING BECAUSE I DON'T WANT SPOTS. IT CLEARS MY PORES OF THE MUCK AND GREASE THAT CAUSES THEM. SPOTS? OXYCUTE 'EM!
OXY AND OXYCUTE 'EM! ARE TRADE MARKS.
ANTIBACTERIAL ACTION
HELPS PREVENT SPOTS
OXY
DAILY FACE WASH
Sensitive
ANTIBACTERIAL ACTION
HELPS PREVENT SPOTS
OXY
DAILY FACE WASH

PROJECT
VIRTUA COP 2

PUBLISHER
SEGA

INITIATED
JANUARY 96

RELEASE
DECEMBER

FORMAT
SATURN

DEVELOPERS
SEGA (AM2)

All we wanted for Christmas last year was a copy of Virtua Cop and a pair of juicy Virtua guns to go with it. Don't know about you, but Santa came up with goods, and while the rest of the street were singing Silent Night we were howling 'Don't move mutha!' and 'Who's the man?' at our big-screen TVs.

This year Sega plan to shatter heavenly peace with a follow-up conversion of Virtua Cop 2. A pale remake, a sad update? Nothing could be further from the truth. Even the incomplete disc of Virtua Cop 2 shown by Sega is a Gangsta Paradise which is technically leaps and bounds beyond the previous version. Best polish that badge – those guns are coming out of retirement.







HOMICIDE – LIFE ON THE STREETS

There are far more enemy targets in Virtua Cop 2, making it much harder to 'map' the game into a predictable duck shoot. Remember the slow opening to Act 1 of the docks? No more gentle introduction in Virtua Cop 2, which kicks in with a jewellery heist in progress. A larger variety of baddies appear – Tarantino types, axe-wielding musclemen, Uzi-toting thugs in balaclavas and wise guys in the first level alone. A real challenge is set by the 'ones who get away', baddies who cross your field of vision for a couple of seconds before making off.





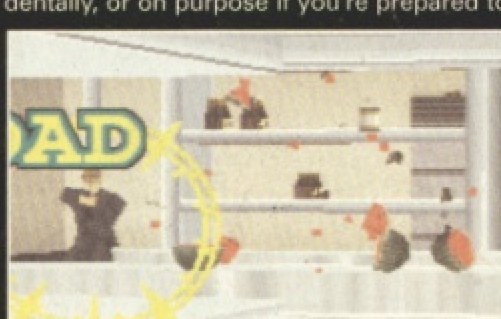






WEAR AND TEAR

AM2 took note of Virtua Cop fans love of shooting up the scenery, and there's tons more of it in Cop 2. Many of the objects lying around can be wasted accidentally, or on purpose if you're prepared to take some damage by ignoring the armed targets. The cruise liner of level two is particularly rich in perishable goods – Champagne bottles stacked in the bar and a row of ripe watermelons lined up in the kitchen are just two highlights.











Gangland boss Ronnie 'Truck Tosser' Scarface tries it on. Sort 'im out.



"Get out from behind that bar now! I'm gonna come down on you so hard you'll be looking up to do your shoelaces! You're nicked!"

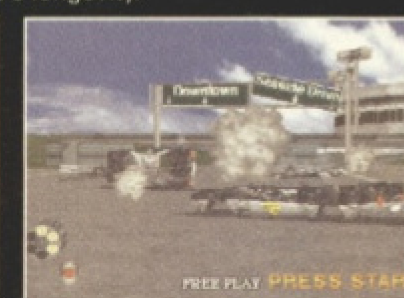




FOLLOW THROUGH

You now have a choice of routes on each of the three levels, picked by shooting the signs after the second act. These take you through totally different areas, increasing the game's longevity.













THE SET PIECE

In Cop 2 the action is made more interesting by scene-setting, rather than just strolling through picking off targets, and the size of each level is roughly twice that of Virtua Cop. Learn to expect the unexpected:



CAR CHASE

Cars spin across the path of your pursuit, pedestrians flee, hostages hang perilously from rear windows.



DOCK AREA

An enemy chopper tries to land and offload its cargo of terrorists amid the crossfire.



PORT BUILDING

The reservation desk provides cover for hostiles elements. They didn't reckon on the monitors above their heads.



BALLROOM

It's a game of hide and seek, as terrorists hide under the tables, and then assault you from the band stage.

PROJECT
DOOM

PUBLISHER
GT INTERACTIVE

INITIATED
DECEMBER 1995

RELEASE
CHRISTMAS

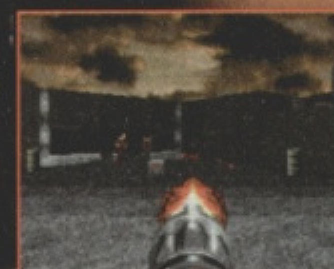
FORMAT
SATURN

DEVELOPERS
RAGE

When the Saturn was released in Japan in 1994, one of the first games promised was a conversion of id software's seminal 3D blastathon Doom. Sadly, this was not to be, and the game sank into that deep, dark pit of obscurity otherwise known as 'development hell'. Now, nearly two years later, GT have picked up and dusted down the project, and the game is FINALLY nearing completion.

When Doom was first released on the PC in 1993 it was hailed as a landmark title. You can tell it is was something special, because everyone seems to remember where they were the first time they saw it. In terms of gameplay it wasn't that far removed from its predecessor Wolfenstein 3D, but in terms of technical accomplishment it was streets ahead. Doom's texture mapped environment and clever lighting effects managed to generate something that most video games can only dream of: atmosphere. Creeping down a darkened corridor with grunts and snarls coming from all directions, not knowing what creature lurks around the next corner is truly a terrifying experience. And pretty soon Saturn owners will be able to feel the fear for themselves...








LINK UP FRENZY!

Doom was the first game to offer four player simultaneous action across a PC network. Players could either work together to complete the levels (cool) or battle it against each other to see who was the best (even cooler). It is this aspect of Doom that has shaped the future of multiplayer gaming, and thankfully, it's a feature that has made it to the Saturn version. Set to use the link up cable released later this year, Doom will allow two Saturns to connect together for an unparalleled deathmactch frag frenzy. Trust us: it's the dog's!



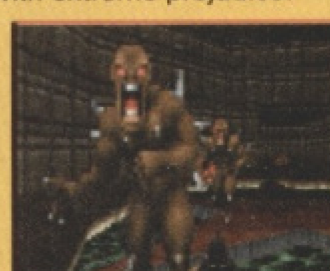


MONSTER MUNCH

The forces of hell aren't a pretty sight. These are the creatures sent to overrun the military outposts that form Earth's defence. They are evil, pure and simple, and must be stopped at all costs! Execute with extreme prejudice!

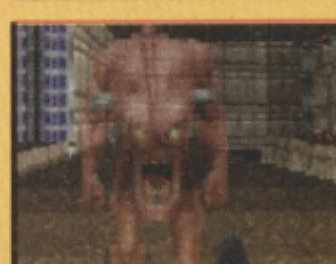

FORMER HUMAN


SARGENT


IMPS


DEMON


CHAINGUN DUDE


SPECTRE


LOST SOUL


CACODEMON



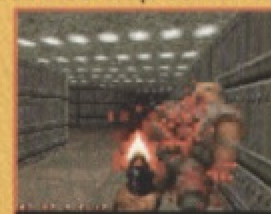


UP YOUR ARSENAL!

There may well be an army of salivating monsters out to rip you limb from limb, but at least you've got some heavy duty ordinance on your side. Here's the low down on all the weapons you can secure in Saturn Doom, including the big boy in the black: the BFG 9000! Go slap some lead upside their head!


KNUCKLE DUSTER


CHAINSAW


PISTOL


SHOTGUN


SUPER SHOTGUN


CHAINGUN


ROCKET LAUNCHER


PLASMA GUN


LOOK, ITS THE...


...BFG 9000

AMALGAMATION



There have been so many versions of Doom that Saturn owners may be a tad confused as to exactly what they're getting. Well it's like this, Saturn Doom is primarily based on the PlayStation version: Doom – Special Edition. The levels (52 in all), monsters, monster placing and music are all the same (so no Arch Viles or Spider Mastermind I'm afraid). However, Saturn Doom also has a lot in common with the PC version, namely the sound effects and the overall graphical feel. Does this make it the best version of Doom yet? You'd better tune in next month to find out.







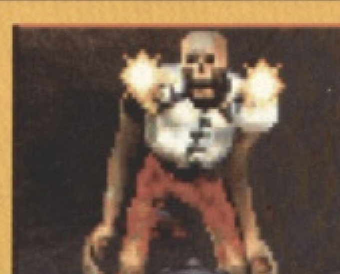



CYBERDEMON

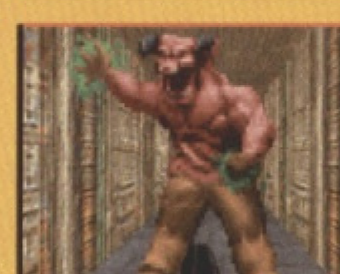

ARACHNOTRON


PAIN ELEMENTAL


MANCUBUS


RENEVANT


HELLNIGHT


BARON OF HELL

PROJECT
HEXEN

PUBLISHER
GT INTERACTIVE

INITIATED
NOVEMBER '96

RELEASE
NOVEMBER '96

FORMAT
SATURN

DEVELOPERS
PROBE

The success of Doom inevitably spawned a number of clones, none of which were as good as id's original. One of the better attempts, however, was Raven Software's Heretic. Licensed by id themselves, Heretic utilised the Doom engine to do an ace sword 'n' scorcery take on the familiar 3D shoot 'em up genre. It had mystical cross bows, wands, gorgons, wizards, giant minatours and an awesome dragon rider final boss.

Heretic also benefited from a number of gameplay additions that gave it the edge over the other Doom clones. For a start you could look up and down, allowing players to finally see the blind spots that plagued Doom. Secondly, Heretic introduced the concept of items that could be collected, stored and used at will. And thirdly, you could turn your opponents into chickens. Heretic never received a wide release, however, so didn't do very well. However, this didn't stop Raven from going ahead with a sequel: Hexen. Hexen was loads better than Doom or Heretic, and was in fact, the number one PC 3D shooter right up until Duke Nukem 3D and Quake. It had better graphics, better sound, cooler items AND you could turn your opponents into pigs! Awesome! And guess what? It's headed to a console named after a planet...



The Cleric's fourth weapon - The Justifier - shoots a missile of white light that explodes on contact to release a horde of screaming ghosts that rip everything in the vicinity to shreds! Cool or what!? This is also a good weapon to use in link up deathmatch battles against your mates!

THE STORY SO FAR

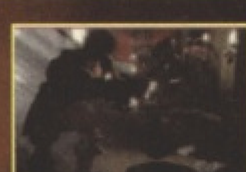
Being a sequel and all, Hexen is actually the second instalment in the ongoing Serpent Rider saga. In the original Heretic, an elven champion from the Sidhe tribe rose up to free his world from slavery by defeating the first of the serpent riders, D'Sparil. He succeeded, but that still left two even more powerful serpent riders floating about, who were determined not to make the same mistake as their ex-business partner. In Hexen you come up against the second serpent rider – the mighty Korax – and his three evil henchmen. And just in case you were wondering, Raven are set to finish the trilogy with a third Heretic instalment that uses the Quake graphics engine. Can't wait.











BARATUS THE WARRIOR



Of the three characters, Baratus is the quickest and most powerful. His brute force makes him a formidable opponent in close combat, while his agility allows him to leap huge distances. However, Baratus' 'get in and hack' approach belies a weakness in long range magical attacks.

1. SPIKED GAUNTLET



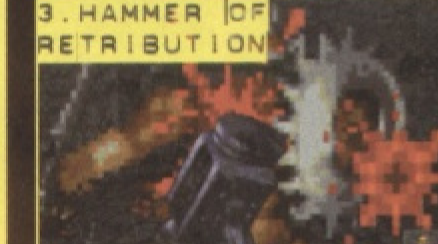
A Left and a right! Oof!

2. TIMON'S AXE



Electro-charged axe of doom!

3. HAMMER OF RETRIBUTION



Throws flaming hammers!

4. QUIETUS!



The runesword of death!

MULTIPLE PERSONALITIES

To capitalise on the RPG nature of Hexen, you can choose to play as one of three different character 'classes', each with their own weapons and physical attributes. Each character can secure up to four different character-specific weapons, all of which consume a mixture of green and blue mana. One nice twist is that the all powerful 'BFG 9000' weapons are split into multiple segments, and you've got to find all the bits before you can use them.





(right) The porkulator turns all monsters into sqealing pigs! They squash real easy! Oink! Oink!







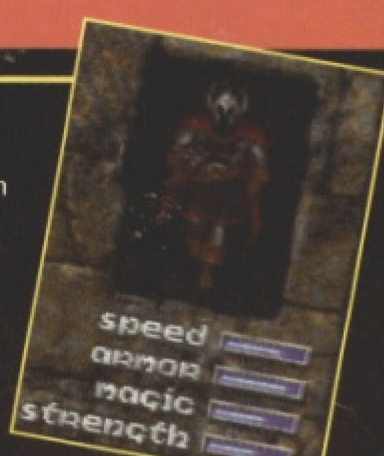
There are plenty of monsters to slap around in the uncharted realms of Hexen, including Ice Wendigo's, Dragons and Ghosts. However, nothing, NOTHING, can prepare you for the final battle with the Serpent Rider Korax! He's awesome!

WHERE DO I GO NOW

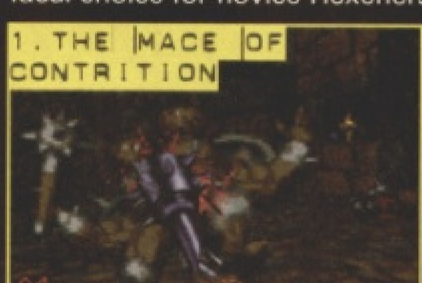
Unlike Doom, or even Heretic, Hexen features a non-linear level structure similar to the brilliant Exhumed. Rather than progress from level to level one after another, Hexen is structured around a number of central Hub levels, from which several sub-levels (and sub sub-levels) can be accessed. Obtaining keys, objects or solving puzzles in these sub levels will alter the central hub, allowing access to new areas. Get it? So now you've got to do a bit of exploring as well as just massacring every creature in the land.

PARIAS THE CLERIC

Parias is a well balanced character, with good close and long range offensive capabilities. His speed and stamina are both decent, while the serpent staff allows him to drain health and energy from monsters to replenish his own supply! Parias is probably the easiest character to use, thus making him an ideal choice for novice Hexeners.

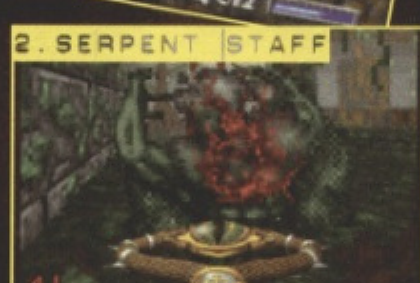


1. THE MACE OF CONTRITION



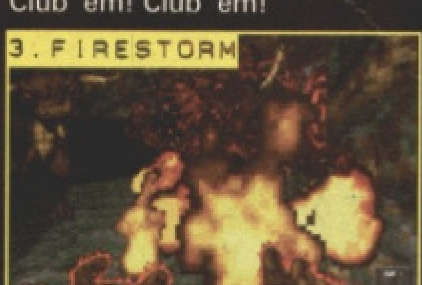
Club 'em! Club 'em!

2. SERPENT STAFF



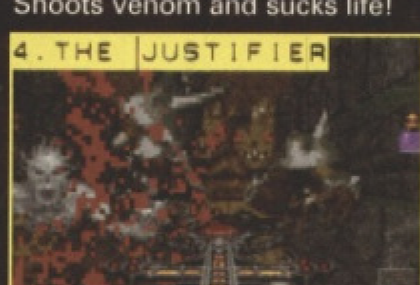
Shoots venom and sucks life!

3. FIRESTORM



Cook some monster steak!

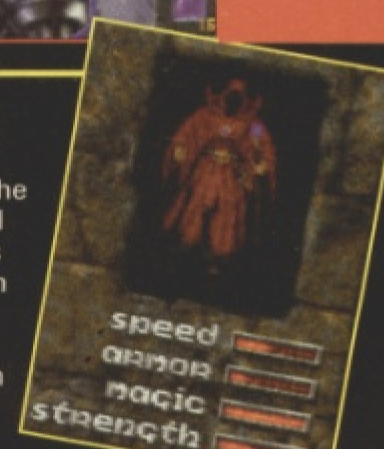
4. THE JUSTIFIER



Screaming souls rip your foes!

DAEDOLON THE MAGE

Many foolish humans underestimate the power of Daedolon. His physically frail body belies awesome magical powers that make Daedolon second to none in long range combat. However, his low stamina and speed make him a character that only experienced Hexen players can use to proper effect.



1. SAPPHIRE WAND



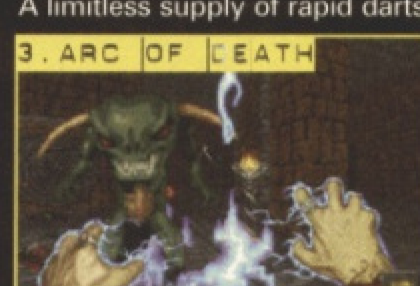
A limitless supply of rapid darts

2. FROST SHARDS



Freeze 'em then blast 'em!

3. ARC OF DEATH



Arcs of electric death!

4. BLOODSCOURGE



Ultra Powerful homing spheres

PROJECT
SEGA AGES

PUBLISHER
SEGA

INITIATED
APRIL '96

RELEASE
OCTOBER '96

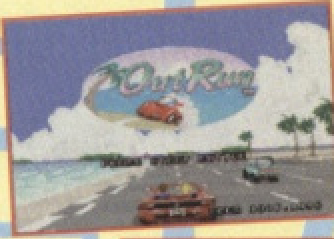
FORMAT
SATURN

DEVELOPERS
AM2

SEGA AGES

As our resident office retro-king, Dave Kelsall, reminds us all on a daily basis: 'old games are great!'. Er, right Dave. But while most 'old' games are about as welcome as a bowl of pork scratchings at a Jewish dinner party, there are still quite a few 'retro classics' out there that we wouldn't mind seeing receive the Saturn treatment..

Riding the current wave of nostalgia, Sega have decided to re-release arcade perfect conversions of three of their most popular retro games: Afterburner, Space Harrier and the immortal OutRun. In Japan these games where released on three seperate CD's, and all did pretty well for themselves. But over here, Sega have decided to put ALL THREE GAMES onto ONE DISC! Excellent! There are also plans to release Alien Syndrome, Galaxy Force (poo!), and Power Drift .





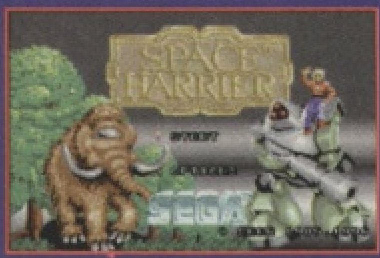






SPACE HARRIER (1984)

On its initial release Space Harrier was remarkable not just for its amazing sprite scaling technology and lightening paced gameplay, but also for its unique hydraulic cabinet. You controlled your on-screen hero with what resembles a helocopter control stick, and the cabinet moved with you. For those who don't remember, Space Harrier is a bizarre 'into the screen' shoot 'em up featuring dragons, giant mushrooms and flying gremlin heads.
PREVIOUS CONVERSIONS: Master System, Megadrive (Space Harrier 2), 32X

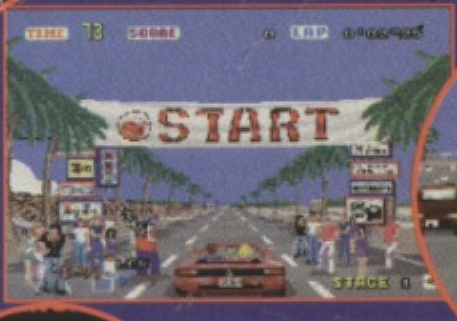


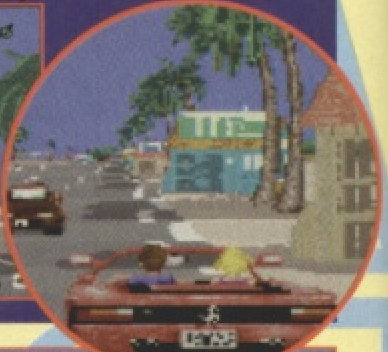




OUTRUN (1986)

This is the game that most die hard Sega fans will buy the Ages pack for! Yu Suzuki's brilliant racing sim was originally released in a hydraulic Ferrari cabinet complete with steering wheel and gear stick! And now, finally, an arcade perfect version is available to buy. Super fast sprite scaling action with 15 different stages, accompanied by some of the catchiest tunes in gaming histroy! Start your engines...
PREVIOUS CONVERSIONS: Master System, Megadrive (OutRun 2017)





AFTER BURNER (1987)

A personal favourite of mine. Take off from the aircraft carrier Sega and use missiles and machine guns to blast seven shades of hell out of the seemingly neverending supply of enemy forces. Destroy wave after wave of planes (and in the bonus stages, ground targets), lock on with missiles and use the patented F-14 'roll' tecnique to avoid enemy fire. Another hydraulic coin-op that showcased AM2's phenomenal sprite scaling technology, no-one has managed an arcade perfect conversion...until now.
PREVIOUS CONVERSIONS:Master System, Megadrive (Afterburner 2), Mega CD (Afterburner 3), 32X













Available on Saturn and PlayStation. Coming soon to PC CD-ROM
actua GOLF
"The best golf game ever"
PlayStation Plus
92%
Total Saturn
9 out of 10
PSX-Pro
4 out of 5 "The best PlayStation golf game"
C&VG
8 out of 10
PlayStation Star Player Award
Official PlayStation Magazine
• Live interactive commentary
• Spectacular scenery using 3D technology
• Two challenging courses to fully test your golfing skills
• True playing environment enabling total freedom of movement
• Fully customised players and club selection
• Multi-player options
• Multi-view shot tracking and replay
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Featuring Peter Alliss - "The Voice of Golf"
actua SPORTS SERIES
PlayStation
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PC cd rom
CATCH US ON THE WEB http://www.gremlin.com
Gremlin

PREVIEWS



BY: GREMLIN

GAME TYPE: DRIVING

PLAYERS: 1-2

PRICE: TBA

RELEASE: NOVEMBER

COMPLETE



HARDCORE 4X4

The number of truck racing games could be counted on a single hand of a man with several fingural amputations. Unsurprisingly as the average 'Leyland DAF' is not noted for its 'vitesse'. But Gremlin have said scenario in mind with Hardcore 4x4, and aim to get around the problem with a title that presents new gameplay challenges. Hardcore takes you off the beaten track to six undulating terrains, each offering a rough-hewn circuit which is a handful for any self-respecting off-roader.

The circuits are comparitively larger to any previous driving game, and navigation is made more difficult by a lack of clear markings, occasional route choices and the complete absence of driver toilet facilities. The arcane workings of vehicle tranmission are also fully explored in a game which demands you become proficient with the gearbox, as efficient use of the lower, more powerful gauges enable you to scale the slippery mud inclines while higher gears allow you to take full advantage of the outrageous downward slopes.

The original 3D game engine creates a distinctive world of intricate contours, and convincing vehicle motion to match, produced by sophisticated virtual models of six different all-terrain motors, offering delightful views of the underside when you tip the thing over for the canteenth time. Gremlin have decided against a split-screen mode, instead aiming to harness the promised link-up cable to allow two human players to compete in a field of six competitors. And we should review it next issue.







He might have lost control, he might be flashing his undersides intentionally, I don't know...









THE GEAR

Each vehicle model responds according to build. The choice covers the most popular worldwide workload vehicles. Women, of course, will be attracted to the range of flattering colours.

STOMPER

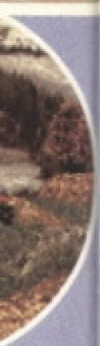


BASHER



MORRIS







Instead of buying Hardcore, just troll around the English 'countryside' any summer weekend to experience this.



RDCORE 4X4





THE GUTS

The scenes are what you might expect: the great outdoors, inhospitable deserts and remote mountains. The textures are detailed and the clipping, surprisingly, is kept under control.

BLACK FOREST

Starting on 50m of road, BF soon descends into mud and bumps worthy of Junior Kickstart.





GOBI DESERT

Tank crews watch with interest as you attempt to conquer sand dunes and negotiate tight bends.

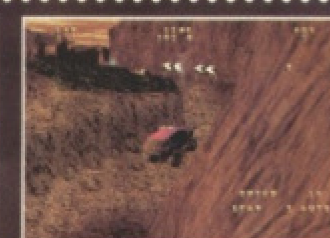




GRAND CANYON

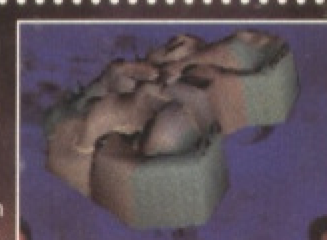
Featuring some of the narrowest sections of any course, it's easy to lose sight of your opposition in the winding canyon.





SNAKE PASS

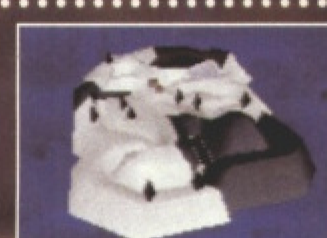
The first half has you toiling up the track and crossing a crevasse on a narrow bridge. The second rewards you with an excellent downhill section.





NORTHERN SIBERIA

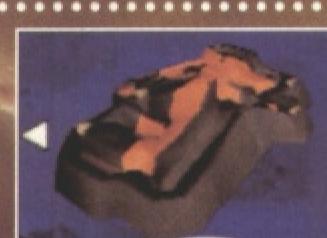
Grip, as you might expect, is the issue here, with even the smallest hills requiring decent momentum to overcome.





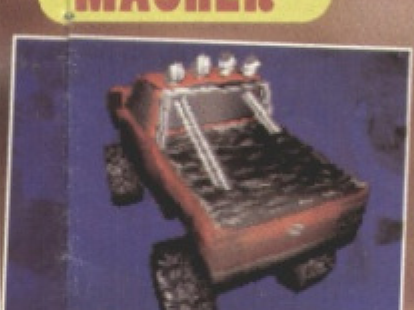
MOUNT VESUVIUS

The first racing game set on a live volcano, in our experience. The ash driving surface poses the constant threat of disorientation.

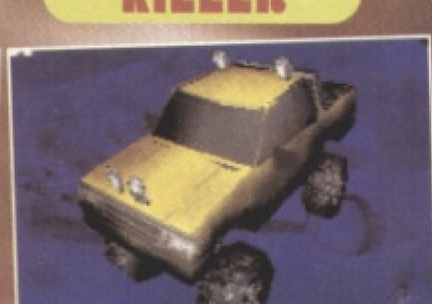




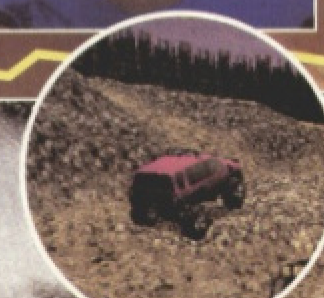
MASHER



KILLER











BY	CAPCOM
GAME TYPE	BEAT EM UP
PRICE	TBA
RELEASE	NOVEMBER
PLAYERS	1-2
COMPLETE	







There are certain things in this world that just 'are' – a universal truth that exists regardless of humanity's arrogant and subjective scrutiny. When someone tells me that 'Star Wars was a bad film' that's their opinion, and they're entitled to it. But they're wrong. Likewise, when some says 'Street Fighter 2 isn't the best 2D beat 'em up ever made', they're wrong too. It just is.

Street Fighter 2 is getting on a bit now. We've had SF2: Champion Edition, SF2 Turbo, Super SF2, Super SF2 Turbo, SF2: The Movie, SF2: The Anime Game, SF Alpha and now, Street Fighter Alpha 2. In the near future we can look forward to X-Men Vs Street Fighter (Saturn bound), Street Fighter 3D (not Saturn bound) and Street Fighter 3 (who knows?!). Before the words 'flogging' and 'dead horse' spring to your lips, remember that this horse is not dead. It's very much alive. And winning races. Each successive Street Fighter game has unequivocally improved on the last (except for the Movie and Anime ones) and with Alpha 2 Capcom have reached the absolute zenith of 2D fighting games. And now, less than four months after its coin-op debut, it's coming to the Saturn. Oh joy.





The intro (above) reproduced in all its parallax sprite scaling glory. The PlayStation version also has the intro... in glory FMV! Ho Ho Ho!



WHAT'S NEW?

So what's new in Alpha 2? Well, the list starts here: custom combos, new moves and graphics for the old characters, brilliant new backgrounds, a refined chaining system, two alpha counters for every character, mid-game 'dramatic battles', special endings and most importantly five all new characters. Well, they're not really all new. There's Rolento (from Final Fight), Gen (from the original Street Fighter), Dhalsim and Zangief (from Street Fighter 2) and the only really new character – the teenage warrior Sakura. But they're all cool.





Alpha's character select screen in all its glory. We already know of five hidden characters, but are there any more? Stay tuned!

CUSTOMISE YOUR COMBOS!

One of the coolest additions to the Street Fighter techniques arsenal is the Custom Combo. Capcom found that chaining hits was much too easy in Alpha so have made it next to impossible in Alpha 2. To replace this, characters have the ability to string together ANY sequence of attacks into a Custom Combo. By pressing two punches and a kick your Super Combo bar turns into a timer, and your character goes into 'Custom' mode. There's even a special flash if you finish an opponent with a Custom Combo.









STREET FIGHTER ZERO 2 ALPHA?!?! EH?!

When Street Fighter Zero 2 (the Japanese name for Alpha 2) was released in the states, Capcom of America added some hidden characters to appease the American public's lust for secrets – Original Dhalsim, Original Zangief, Evil Ryu and the all powerful Shin Gouki. These new characters proved so successful that Capcom of Japan re-released the American version of the game in Japan (a first), renaming it Street Fighter Zero 2 Alpha. We now know that the Saturn version of Alpha 2 will be a conversion of Zero 2 Alpha, meaning Sega owners get all these secret characters and more! The PlayStation version, on the other hand, is of boring old Alpha 2, with NO NEW secret characters! And appalling loading times! And less animation! Ho Ho Ho!

ry.
but



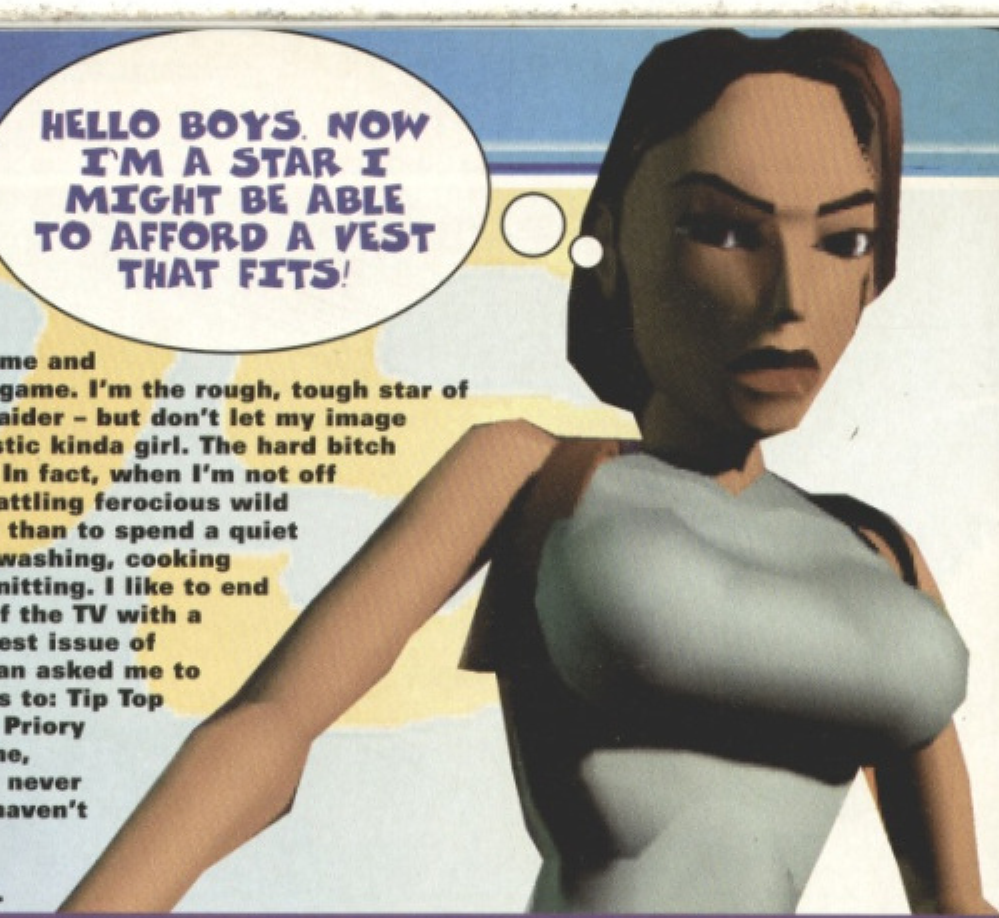
The arcade version of Alpha 2 features a dramatic battle survival mode. No word on whether the Saturn version has such a feature, but we sure hope so.



Shin Gouki versus Shin Gouki. Like in the coin-op, if you can get THREE FINAL ROUND PERFECTS before you reach the last opponent you fight Shin Gouki. He's rock!



DAN'S TIPS



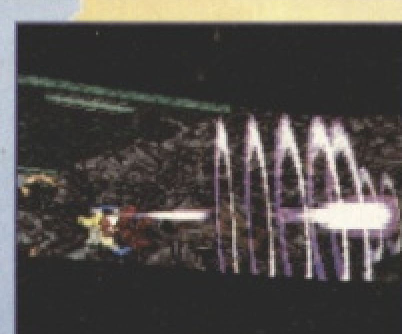
Wotcha. Allow me to introduce myself. Lara Croft's the name and dynamic archaeology's the game. I'm the rough, tough star of Core's new 3D epic Tomb Raider – but don't let my image fool you. I'm really a domestic kinda girl. The hard bitch image is just for the game. In fact, when I'm not off pillaging ancient ruins or battling ferocious wild animals I like nothing more than to spend a quiet evening at home doing the washing, cooking supper, perhaps a spot of knitting. I like to end the day curled up in front of the TV with a mug of Horlicks and the latest issue of Home & Garden. Anyway, Dan asked me to tell you to send all your tips to: Tip Top Tips, Mean Machines Sega, Priory Court, 30-32 Farringdon Lane, London EC1R 3AU. And you never know, if it's a new tip you haven't poached out of another magazine you may just win yourself a game! Love, Lara.

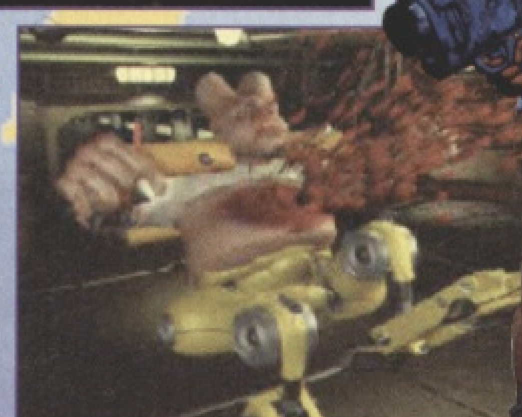
SATURN

LOADED

CHEAT MODE

The bods at Gremlin have seen fit to release this rather helpful 'Easter Egg' which should give novice gamers a chance to see the later levels. In pause mode move the selector to BMG volume then press 'L', Z, B X, C and 'R'. Keeping each button held down. Once activated, pressing 'L' from the pause screen will access the cheat menu with all kinds of goodies.




GUN GRIFFON

UNLIMITED AMMO

Ever suffered those 'out of shells blues' on Sega's brilliant Mech 'em up? Well then this code is for you. At the title screen press B, B, B, C then Start to reveal an unlimited supply of all ammo types. Excellent.



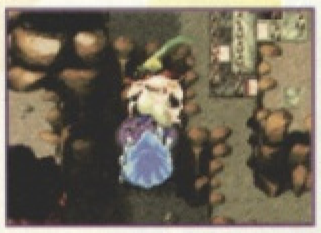
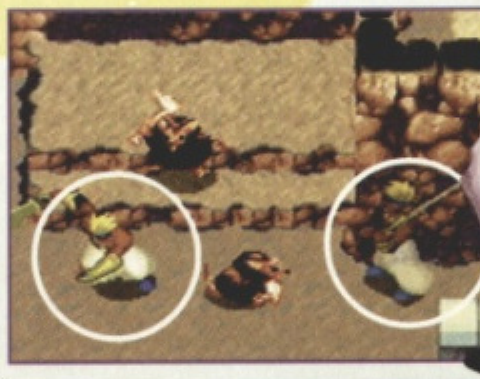


STORY OF THOR 2

INCREDIBLE TWO PLAYER MODE!

We were beginning to think we had underrated this brilliant action/adventure title when along came this amazing cheat. Whilst playing the game press Z to call up the weapon menu, then hold X and press the 'L' Button. Release them and a second player will be added to the game! This second transparent Thor is controlled with the two player D-pad and shares the same energy and spirit bar as player one. Incredible!



GUARDIAN HEROES

CONTINUES

For all those who bought the UK version of Treasure's incredible slash fest and are bitter that the incredible debug mode doesn't work, here are a couple of tips to help ease the pain. For 99 continues set the game on 'easy' difficulty and begin the game. Allow yourself to be killed after you have jumped out of the starting room and choose 'Give Up'. Now, return to the options mode and set the difficulty to hard. When you begin a Story Mode game again you should have 99 continues!

Also, make use of Nicole's 'I'm angry now' move (B+C) as even though it drains your HPs, it recovers a lot of magic points which can then be used to heal you and your party. This is a good way to get back magic points and gain levels quickly.

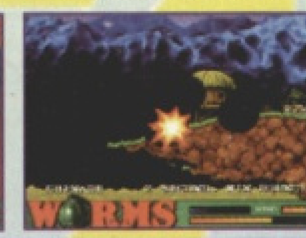



WORMS

EXTRA WEAPONS

We're not sure where you enter this code, but we do know it gives you instant Sheep, Mini-Guns and Banana Bombs. Press CZZ CZZ CZZ somewhere and let us know if you figure out how it works. Cheers.







MEGADRIVE

SAMPRAS '96

CHEATS

Here's a list of all the cheats on the password screen for every player, courtesy Chris Duckers of Shropshire. Cheers Chris!

POTTER
BDFDG
BDFGK
BDFHB
BDF
BDFKF

TURNETTE
BBFBG
BBFCH
BBFGC
BBFHJ
BBFKH

DELGADO
BGFCB
BGFFH
BGFGG
BGFHF
BGFFC
BGFKB

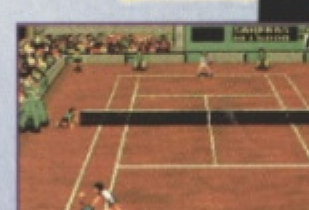
KURASAWA
BJFBG
BJFCH
BJFDD
BJFGC
BJFHJ
BJFKH

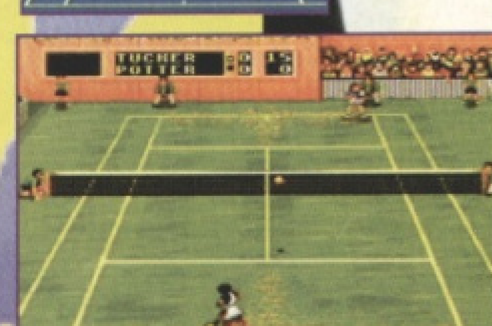
NINTZ
BCFCG
BCFDF
BCFFC
BCFBG
BCFHK
BCFKG

TUCKER
BHFCK
BHFDB
BHFGF
BHFHG
BHFJJ
BHFKK

GEVONOTT
BKFCG
BKFDF
BKFFC
BKFGB
BKFHK
BKFKG

SAMPRAS
FGFH
BFGGG
BFGHF
BFGFC
BFGKB







ATHLETE KINGS WORK OUT



Sega's sporty little number has exerted itself in the Saturn charts the last couple of months, so we thought you might find this assortment of hidden features and playing tips useful.

CHEATS

100M DASH: SKIP MODE



As the announcer gives her introduction, press Up, Left, Down, Right, X in sequence. When the race starts, your character(s) will skip their way to the finish line!

100M DASH: ROLL MODE



Similar to skip mode, press Up, Left, Down, Right, Y, Up, Left, Down, Right, X before the race. The character(s) will do forward rolls the length of the track.

SHOT PUT: NEW METHOD

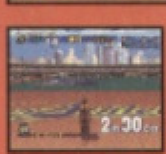


Another control method is available which improves on pressing the action button. Start your throw by rolling the D-pad, same as the discus event, to get the character to rotate through 180 degrees, then throw. Also, pressing left or right changes the camera angle of the throw.

HIGH JUMP: NEW METHOD




Before your run-up, press left or right on the D-pad to select between three approach views. The right-hand one is the conventional Fosbury Flop method. The other two offer another jumping method, the old Straddle Jump that was used before the introduction of the Fosbury Flop in 1968.



BLIMP CONTROL



On events where the airship is visible, it can be controlled by using the L and R buttons on the pad in port 2.

PLAYING TIPS

ALL RUN-UP EVENTS

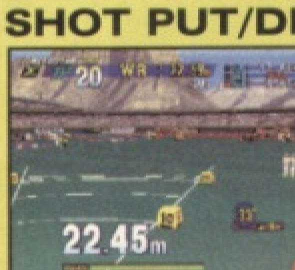
All the events give you more than enough run-up to achieve full speed. Rather than frantically stab the buttons from the off, pace yourself with a gradual build-up of speed.

LONG JUMP



The key to huge distances over 9m is the extending move, achieved by holding the action button after you have selected an angle. You should hear a second 'ping' denoting successful extension. Remember, the optimum angle is 25 degrees.

SHOT PUT/DISCUS



Finding the pad rotation tricky? Use a rag/T-shirt/pair of jocks. Twist the material into a little thumb-sized ball and rub it across the pad in circles. It works. Also, start your rotation on Shot Put as the bar surges, with the discus, wait until his arm is fully extended.

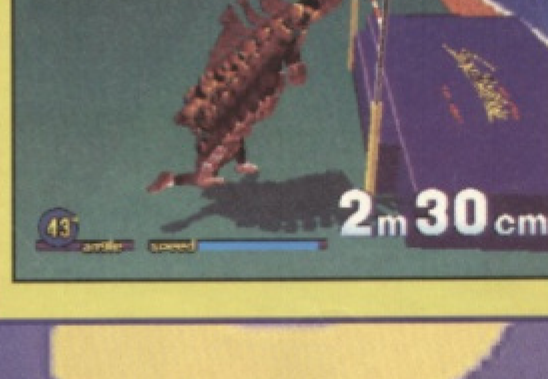
400M



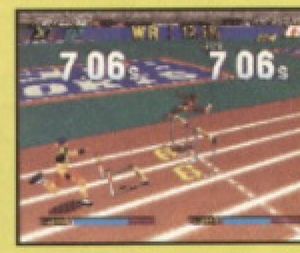
The secret is not to go too early. Use both buttons to catch your opponent on the bend, then use only one button, keeping the power level just level within the fourth stamina segment, to conserve at least three bars of stamina until coming off the final bend when you can romp home for sub-45 second times.

HIGH JUMP

Mark a position about a stride and a half away from the bar for takeoff. The leg flipping move at the end is crucial – start it before you reach the bar.



110M HURDLES



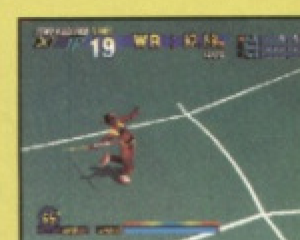
Nothing much apart from mark two strides between each hurdle, tap the buttons to shorten your stride and keep running as you jump.

POLE VAULT



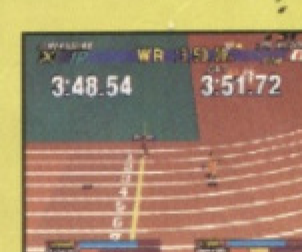
People find this tricky because they lose speed as they plant. Build your speed to peak at the white line and lower and hold the pole at that point. But continue to run with at least one button to maintain power! Release the pole earlier rather than later to project yourself over the bar at an angle.

JAVELIN

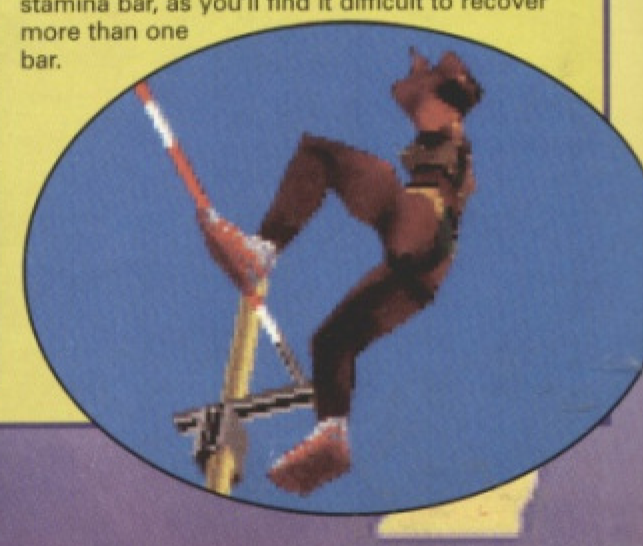


It's vital to release the javelin at the last possible moment. Releasing early won't work, because the character won't be in the correct throwing position (regardless of the power level). Watch to see the character pull back, and release at the point shown here.

1500M RACE



The trickiest event. Your strategy is to be a pace-setter, and set off into a strong lead. The CPU drones will catch up. As your energy falls, drop to a single button and use the drones to push you forward. Once your energy bar is replaced, set off again. Don't drop to a single stamina bar, as you'll find it difficult to recover more than one bar.





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THOR 2

PART 1

No one does RPG guides like MEAN MACHINES. So we done another one, for the rather ace Thor on Saturn.



1. WATER SHRINE

Make your way from the village chief's hut down into the shrine. Hit the switch on the left to open the steel door. In the next room, you may find some gifts by slashing the reeds. From now on, try all foliage in the hope of finding something. Make your way up the waterfall in the next chamber, push the iron pot onto the level below and use it as a step onto the stone pillars, which take you to the chest containing a bow (1).





Continue into the room with the knight. Kill him and make your way to the next room, with moving platforms above you. You can reach the objects here by taking running jumps. In the next room equip your bow and shoot an arrow through the flames to the switch (2). This opens a door into an ante chamber. First approach the statue and press A until it glows, then B to receive a message from Reharl. Now take your bow and shoot a high shot at the lower bush on the right. A platform will appear. On this right side is a further room giving you a scroll. Use this with the glowing energy point to power your bow for three shots. At the door, use your magical energy (A button) to gain entry.



2. WATER SHRINE BOSS MANEEK

Maneek is simple. Use your sword so you can deflect his yellow crescent attacks. Watch for his jumps, as they create a circular tidal wave when he lands. If he starts to roll, run to the opposite corner. Use running sword attacks to bring him down.



3. FIRE SHRINE

Make your way from the shrine back to the elder's hut. An earthquake will begin, so return to the shrine, but this time talk to the man waiting at the south doors. These will open, leading onto a path which will take you to the Fire Shrine. On all levels of the Shrine you will encounter spiders. These are best tackled by crouching (R button). Summon Dytto and use her to freeze the ice pillars ahead of you to form stepping stones (1). Use these to retrieve the rod from the red chest.

Also on this level is a rock. Push it over the edge to reveal gifts. Now push the iron ball to the right and use it to scale the cliff. Select your rod to learn a new trick: the combination left, right, left, right + attack can break trees with light brown trunks (only that colour!). Here this will bring a chest into your grasp that contains a gem. Any gems you find increase the powers of certain spirits (the aquamarine here will raise Dytto's level).



Now find the obelisk that instructs you about crouching. There is an opening just above it that leads to a chest and switch that will remove the door blocking stairs down. On the next floor you will encounter mild resistance from bombardiers and skeletons. Progress through to the fiery pits, where Dytto is required to eliminate the flames guarding the key to the lower floor (2). There is a blue circle on this level – a useful facility to always replenish your magical power. On the next level down go immediately right and use Dytto to extinguish the flame. Now banish her (X twice) to save magical energy. Now go to the left of the level and smash the tree trunks holding the ball. Jump across the upper level and smash the lone trunk to find the level key. Ignore the black chest – it's a trap. Go to the far right of the level, and face a surprise attack from some soldiers. Beyond the twin torches is the boss.





4. FIRE SHRINE BOSS

Dytto is very helpful here at neutralising the fireballs spewed forth. Watch for the boss' face appearing which is a preliminary to a hot breath attack so stay clear. Jump kicks are the best way to whittle down his energy, and once he's mobile, jump kicking is a safe way to repel him and finish him off.





5. EARTH SHRINE







Returning to the village is not hard. A mysterious stranger has arrived. Speak to the elder first, then visit her in her hut. Return to the elder to receive his new commission — finding Bawu. The Earth Shrine is just west of the entrance to the Fire Shrine. Walk left and then along the river's edge, using Efreet to break the tree trunks with his breath (1). Jump down the small square hole and then ascend the long set of stairs. At the top walk right off screen and you'll find a gem on the edge of a cliff (2). Go back left and down to a second larger hole. Here there's a key in a chest that opens a door with a switch hidden under a bush. In the next room, lighting the torch will let you proceed.

Run through the next room, jump on the plant (jumpgrass) and head up. You are now in zombie territory. Efreet's Fire Torpedo (A twice) is an easy way to cut through the hordes. In the room after the spiders, there is a key hidden in the reeds. Use this to open the bottom right door. Here is a new scroll, which works with the rod. Back in the preceding room is an energy point to go with it (3). With your Rod of Purification you can do various things. Firstly, go to skeleton in the top right hand part of that room and use it. He will respond. Now use it on the broad leafed plants – they will turn into Jumpgrass! The powered Rod will also dispatch all undead spirits with one attack. It looks good too.

Use the plants to leave by the left exit. You enter a large open area – go down and to the right, passing the rock. Climb the steps in the next screen and return to push the rock off the ledge. Take the key and activate the bridge made of stepping stones. Jump down the hole directly beside these, then go south out of the screen, south again and across the stone walkway. Go far left, up the steps and along until you come to an archway created by another level. Use Efreet to melt some ice, then summon Dytto and use her to extinguish the flames. One hides a rod power orb (4). Charge your rod and use it to make jumpgrass at the bottom of the room. Climb out then travel up, passing through a narrow gap in the foliage on the right. You should come to a hole next to a torch. Make sure you have Efreet, as he will be lighting a torch when you land. Jump down. Go up and left, taking the ginger root from the chest. When you come to the sign about looking south, take a running jump directly south, and you'll find a chest containing the fourth weapon – a long sword!(6)





Return to the bottom jumpgrass and this time explore the other routes. There's a pad which creates a step between the ridge and the lower level, and a skeleton who may be revived with the rod's power (5). He rewards you with a path to another aquamarine. There are also two holes leading to the two keys you need to enter the boss' lair. The first door is in the bottom left of the room with all the flame pillars.



6. EARTH SHRINE BOSS

Take in Dytto and equip your long sword. Stand bottom left and hold B, waiting to release a spin attack when the tentacle passes. Once it is temporarily destroyed, rush in and make repeated strikes on the main part of the plant. Danger is signalled by the bud swelling. When the hornets erupt, use Dytto's water tornado to bring things to a swift close.





7. SOUND SHRINE





Collect Bawu and return, as the villager suggests, by the river. Talk first with the elder, then Myra, then back to the elder and then Myra, who will give you a cube and directions. There are two trees at the bottom edge of the town. Break the right hand one and collect a stone that gives you rod energy. Leave the town and use this to create jumpgrass at the first hill you come to. There's an aquamarine there. There's another jumpgrass close to the fence beside the pond. Jump into the water and go south – yet another aquamarine, and now Dytto will have a new power. She will now be able to create rod power instantly out of her own magical energy supply (press X once).

Summon Bawu outside the shrine. He will take it upon himself to swallow the ball blocking the entrance. You will face a large guard, then drop down the hole he creates. Go south taking Bawu to swallow the armorats (they cannot be killed). Cross the spike pit, collect the key (1), return to the start. Go right, but before going through the door, take the right passage and collect the sound scroll, which works in conjunction with your bow. In the room beyond the door is a water spout. Use it to summon Dytto and use her healing magic on the withered (grey) bud on the left (2). Now use your rod to create a jumpgrass, and cross the small wall to the chest. Open the door to the south with your new key.

Now you need Efreet. To find a flame use the passage to his shrine. You needn't go far – you can summon him with the blast from the enemy grenades if your timing is good enough! Use Efreet to light the three torches in the new room. Now you must change to Dytto once again, as the next room is a trap, filled with roaming flames which must be put out, and the two switches turned. Leave the chamber and walk to the far right of the level, with a single switch next to a strange gaseous jet. Flicking this opens a steel door. In this room is a bush that conceals a spike. Use your weapon to propel the spike into the stone pillars, which are then destroyed (3). The spike will travel up the long passageway on the left. Wait until it returns and then walk up there to find lots of treasure chests.





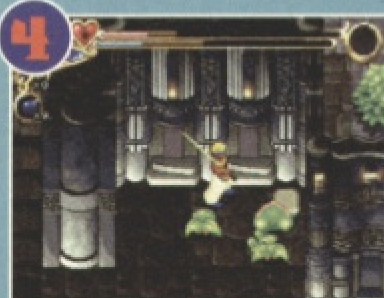
7. SOUND SHRINE CONT...

On the next floor, use the plant to summon Bawu. Look carefully at the floor and you will see three small cracks (two are in the bottom half, which is on a separate screen) (4, previous page). Bawu will prise these open revealing water jets, activating the door to the south. In the back wall of this long rectangular room is a bush. Cut it away to reveal a low passage to crawl through. You can see 'an ancient weapon' which is released when three switches, represented a small stones, are crushed (1). This is down with the stone (left switch) and iron balls for the other two. Now you have bombs. Walk further north in this area and you come to a room with grenaders in an advantageous position on an 'island' of stone. From a point on the stairs bottom-right, fire a high









arrow to knock the grenader onto a switch that will wipe out the enemy battalion and provide you with a means to reach the bonuses here, and a clue for later; 'Last. Left, left, right' (2). Go right back to the start and use your bombs as a delay device to allow you through the double doors. There are two spikes in the next room. Propel one down the steps and into the pillar-filled chamber. Make sure it destroys the final pillar at the top of the stairs, for this is where the key to the wooden door (bottom right of level). You can go so far as to guide it through the steel door out of this room and into the single stone pillar in the room full of grenaders, but only get a Rod scroll for your troubles (which you must already have by now)

The next segment starts simply enough – call Bawu to consume the large iron ball (4). Now look for little dots on the floor that activate electric robots. Stay well clear of them until they've completed their task, signified by a little electronic whistle. Your aims are to light the bulbs, and move the iron balls off the switches. You'll get a Fire Scroll to use with your large sword which will let you destroy grey tree trunks. Use rolling slashes (double d-pad and B button) to slice through two at a time. Uncovering the three switches will give you access to the final bulb, which must be lit by one of the room's four electric sparks (3).



The next room has two elements. A 'new weapon' which is straightforward to operate, and a robot powered by a single spark. Hit the robot to rotate it and guide it towards the box (1). Retrieve the key from the room to the left and go through the wooden door. On the next level you have to do some quick work in the room with trees and shrubs, then prepare for a battle. The next chamber has three switches to be set in three sequences from left to right 1. Right, Left, Left; 2. Left, Right, Left; 3. Left, Right, Right. This opens the way to the boss (2).



8. SOUND SHRINE BOSS

The sand chamber is a game of hide and seek. First, stay away from the untextured areas that form the points of a triangle. This is where the skull form of the boss first appears. The other forms are small whirlwinds, which you should avoid by running around the perimeter shadows – attacking the eyes reveals the monster in its only vulnerable state; and a large whirlwind which tracks you but is slow moving. You can also reveal the monster randomly by attacking the rough human forms of sand which periodically appear.







9. SOUND SPIRIT

With your sound spirit, destroy the crystals in the ante chamber. Using the super microwave attack (double A button) will take out all the crystals within an area, and is an economical use of magic energy. The gold crystal will shatter if you hold the A button for an extra large burst. This creates a warp that leads you out the sound shrine. Return to the town, which has been attacked. Heal the elder, who will offer you his sword of Ordan (long sword level 2). Go to Myra in the elder's hut. Leave the town and travel through the Earth shrine area to the furthest hole to the left, which drops you before the crystal blocking the entrance to the Shrine of Darkness. (1, below)



10. SHRINE OF DARKNESS

Walk down the steps of the Shrine and use a bomb to flick the raised switch. Return up the steps and along the right hand ledge and through the doorway. Jump across to the north, then right to find a key. Go north again and push the rock off the platform onto the stone marker (2). Cross the bridge and walk south to find an aquamarine. Return to the first room and jump left across the gap to find a door. The next room contains another rock to be pushed down. Walk north and uncover a key in the crystals (3). An adjoining room contains the earth scroll, which works with the long sword. Return to the room with the moving platforms, which you should now be able to cross. The bush contains a scroll energy that powers your sword so you may destroy stone pillars. Follow the corridor

















round and down one level to find another scroll. Go back and destroy the four large pillars blocking the way to the next level. In the open area here, open all the chests on top of the pillars (4).

The next room is a mini ambush (nae problem!) and the proceeding room has a chamber that contains a new weapon – the battle knife (6). First go up onto the bridge area and set off the moving platform. Wait until it returns and walk along the narrow area in the foreground (5). There's a chest with a key. Use the key on the wooden door. There's an easy-to-tackle monster behind it, guarding a ruby and another key. Walk onto the bridge and keep going. You'll find a diamond. Walk back to the bridge and take the platform to the mound of soldiers. Retrieve the knife and another key. The room to the north involves a trap. Take Efreet into the room and onto the raised area with the iron ball and switch. Roll the ball onto the switch to create a bridge, then fire Efreet at the torch holder to unleash an enemy (7). Once destroyed the way ahead opens, but another enemy awaits. Power the sword and destroy the pillars still in this room for an elixir. Now proceed east.









This is a complex two-tiered chamber. On the lower chamber you want to set off all the lifts (8) and on the higher chamber you want to light the two torches in the centre which starts lifts which take you to the far left (9). Also light this torch to create a short cut to the entrance of this room. You will probably need to go out and charge the earth scroll again as its needed in the final room in this area, to the south. Reach it by jumping down the small hole on the far left. Use your sword to break a small stone (10) which opens the way to a platform with another small stone, this activates the lift that brings you to... a key (at last!).





Cross the narrow gap on the moving platform and then uncover a blue orb under a tree. Summon Efreet. There are lots of undead in this area. In the next room walk to the far right and melt the ice before destroying any trees (11). Summon Dytto and use her bubbles to weaken the fire dragon. Walk to the far right and enter the tiled room. Summon Brass using the doors and use his sound wave attack to weaken the big jellyfish for a scroll. Go past the iron ball to the room with two robots (12). The aim is to hit the bulb with the left one. Reposition the left one facing left, hit the left switch, then hit the robot to face down. Reposition the robot to face left. Now position the right robot to face down. Hit the right switch and hit the robot to face left so as to intercept the left robot. Sounds very confusing, but the principle is simple. Armed with another key, move to the next level.

Down here, the sparks can be temporarily neutralised by a microwave attack. You'll encounter a robot. Don't worry, it only activates a puppet who tells you 'when the monster growls, strike its tail'. Get yourself prepared for a big encounter. First, the dragons in the ante chamber are easy to dispose of, just stand your ground in the doorway.

11. DARKNESS BOSS









This starts life as an egg (1), and only walking round killing its attendant ghosts seems to wake it. Once alive, it's a monstrous worm (2). As the puppet advises, the best time to strike is when the creature howls at you, as it's stationary, but hold back until the head actually goes for you, as it tracks you. Patience is requires as the tail moves around. If it's on the ground, you will have to crouch to hit it. Don't do running attacks with the large sword, as the chance of fatal contact is too risky.

NEXT MONTH

We continue with a guide to finding the final spirit, Agito's Lair, a secret area and the bits you might otherwise have missed. Be there!

THOR 2 PART 2

By now every self respecting Saturn owner will have got himself (or herself) a copy of NiGHTS and a sexy black analogue pad to play it on. You'll probably already be practising hard to notch up a brilliant high score for the great EMAP Score Attack Challenge. Not wishing to see our readers come last in the mag ladder, here are some useful tips to give you the edge.



MIGHTY NIGHTS!

It's a good idea to take some time out first to master the control of NiGHTS. Here are a few pointers.

THE 'L' AND 'R' BUTTONS

The L and R buttons can be used for more than just making NiGHTS perform stunts. They actually enable him to make 90 degree turns and sharp manoeuvres that are otherwise impossible. Plus, with practice, they can also allow him to perform larger paraloops.





When you Touch Dash the Nightmarians they fly off as balls. If a ball hits a Nightopian he lays a mutant egg!

KILLING NIGHTMARIANS



There are four ways NiGHTS can destroy Nightmarians: by paralooping them (catching them in the void of his loop), Drill Dashing them (flying into them with the dash button held down), Touch Dashing them (grabbing them then dashing them), and Touch Looping them (grabbing them and spinning around them).
Firstly, by paralooping around them he can catch them in his void and blast them away. Secondly he can Drill Dash them (ie fly into them with the dash button pressed down) sending them flying away as balls. Thirdly, he can Touch Dash them (grab them THEN Drill Dash them).

PARALOOPING ITEMS



NiGHTS' paraloop is essential to the game, and not just for destroying Nightmarians. When NiGHTS performs a paraloop, he sucks in all of the items caught within the void of the loop – even if they are in the background or foreground of the course. These items are not collected immediately (as they would be if NiGHTS touched them) but instead 'home in' on NiGHTS and are collected a second later. This is absolutely crucial to sustaining large links, as 'dragging' items in this fashion allows NiGHTS to keep a link going across a large gap where there are otherwise no items to perpetuate the link.

SNAG AND DRAG

We can take the principal of paralooping items during links one step further. We know that 'dragging' items allows NiGHTS to keep a link going across a large gap, but what about while he's actually looping the items in the first place? Well, you may have noticed that most clusters of stars or chips appear in a circular formation. This is to allow NiGHTS to collect the OUTSIDE items of the cluster while he loops the middle ones which will then be dragged after him. With practice you can even use this technique on a line of three chips or stars.



...GHTS
...reams ...



POINTS MAKE PRIZES

Unless you're looking to develop a particular level's A-Life (which we'll deal with next month), your aim when starting a new go in NiGHTS is simply to score as many points as possible! And don't worry if you're still struggling to achieve a C grade: the grade for each course is directly related to the score.







CHECKPOINT 1: FREE THE IDEYA

Once you've chosen your dream and the level has loaded, your first objective is to free the course's Ideya gem from the floating balloon claw as quickly as possible. This is because A) you get a load of points for destroying the claw quickly (120 minus the time it took you to free the gem multiplied by 100), and B) everything you score is DOUBLED once the gem is in your possession. So collect 20 blue chips and head straight for the claw!

CHECKPOINT2: BONUS TIME

Despite the name, Bonus Time is where the majority of the game is played. Once you've destroyed the claw and got the Ideya, your only aim is to zoom around the course as many times as possible scoring as many points as you can in the allotted time! Here's a run down on the things NiGHTS can do to score points.







CHIPS

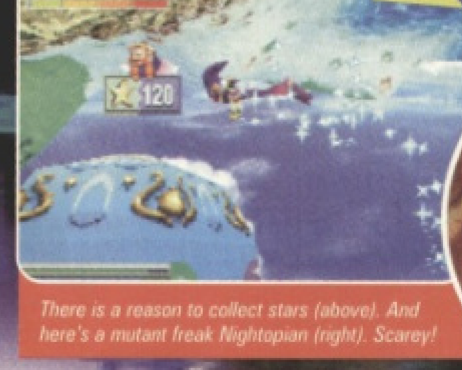
Chips give you points in two ways. Firstly, they can be collected in sequence with other items to sustain a link. Secondly, when NiGHTS returns to his temple at the end of each course you are awarded 50 points for every gold chip you have collected. So 99 chips (the maximum you can collect) scores you 4950 points.

STARS

You may have noticed that sometimes a Pian appears above NiGHTS' temple holding a board with a number on it. This is the total number of Stars that NiGHTS has collected on that dream, and by flying into the Pian on the last course (course four) you can cash in your Stars to the tune of 10 points per Star.







There is a reason to collect stars (above). And here's a mutant freak Nightopian (right). Scarey!







NIGHTMARIANS

You get a hearty 200 points for killing a Nightmarian in any fashion. Of course, this is doubled during Bonus Time so it's worth waiting until the Ideya is in your possession before destroying the Nightmarians.



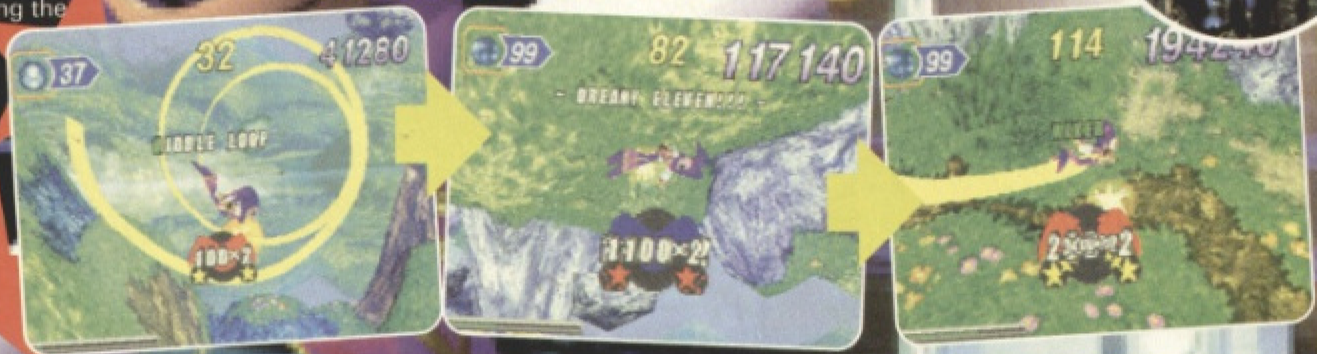
POINT BALL

NiGHTS opens a point ball by flying into it then achieving a specific link size indicated by the number on the ball. The number counts down as you notch up the link, and when it reaches zero the ball opens awarding you 1000 points for your troubles.



STUNT RIBBON

The Stunt Ribbon is one of the most effective ways of scoring points. When NiGHTS flies through an Acrobat Hoop he is given approximately 6 seconds in which to perform as many stunts as possible using the 'L' and 'R' buttons. Generally you score a 100 points per stunt (so a Dreamy Eleven would be 1100 points), though if you can manage 12 or more stunts you are awarded a 'Superb!!!' rating and get a massive 2000 points! A cheeky way of doing this is to simply fly along the ceiling or floor tapping 'L' and 'R'. The floor cuts the stunts short, allowing you to rack up the points in a shorter space of time.







LINKS

A link can be started and sustained by one of three things: flying through a hoop, collecting a star or collecting a chip. Links score the corresponding number of points multiplied by ten (ie. a 3 link is worth 30) up to the ten link mark, after which the score peaks and each successive link scores 100 links. After each item in the link has been activated you have one second in which to reach another item before it fades away and the score accumulator is reset. Certain courses allow you to achieve what is known as a 'continuous link', that is, a link which you can sustain from one lap to the next, allowing for (in theory) a link size that is limited only by the amount of time you have.





A 314 link on Frozen Bell course one! Nick is something of an ubermeister when it comes to NiGHTS.



CHECKPOINT THREE: THE BOSSES

A good performance against the boss (or Nightmaren) is absolutely critical to achieving a record breaking score. When you beat a boss you are awarded a score multiplier directly related to the amount of time taken, anything from X1.0 (the worst) to X2.0 (the best). In order to get X2.0 you've got to defeat the boss in record time - normally under 20 seconds! Also, although it's possible to select the easiest boss from the NIGHTMAREN RANDOM OFF option in the diary, real NiGHTS masters will always play with the RANDOM setting ON.



GILLWING

X2.0 MULTIPLIER: 110 seconds

There are two ways to kill Gillwing. The first (and slowest) is to repeatedly grab his head and touch-dash it. The second (and fastest) is to paraloop his body. By performing a large tear-shaped paraloop that encompasses both his head and tail, it is possible to destroy Gillwing in ONE GO! A guaranteed X2.0 multiplier.

PUFFY

X2.0 MULTIPLIER: 95 seconds

You do not need to spin Puffy to gain power for the throw. The spin is used to pick the right angle at which to fire off Puffy through the next breakable section. Be careful not to grab her after she has just rebounded off a wall or you'll incur the dreaded 5 second penalty. You can't afford to make one mistake if you want the X2.0 multiplier.



GULPO

X2.0 MULTIPLIER: 105 seconds

An easy boss, but one that is surprisingly hard to do quickly. The trick is in being able to tell which winged bumper will propel you through the aquadome at the right level to hit Gulpo. Picking the right height is easy (there's only three), but judging the angle is more difficult. Often it pays to travel left around the aqua-dome as well as right.





CLAWZ

X2.0 MULTIPLIER: 100 seconds

We still haven't found a good way of beating Clawz quickly yet, so if you know of one – tell us! Something that does occasionally work is to use the mice to propel NiGHTS in the opposite direction to Clawz, and sometimes you'll get lucky and take him by surprise as he stops to light a fuse.





REALA

X2.0 MULTIPLIER: 105 seconds

Probably the quickest boss in the game, simply because you only have to hit him three times. Watch as Reala approaches and time a paraloop so that he flies right into in on his way to reach you (this takes a bit of practice). Repeat two more times and voila!





JACKLE

X2.0 MULTIPLIER: 100 seconds

Jackle is a tricky boss initially, but easy once you get the hang of him. Use the dash button to close the gap, and adopt a high/low pattern to dodge his multi-coloured throwing cards. Then, once you grab his body, touch dash him and keep an eye on which direction his coat goes. If you can stay between him and his coat, you can defeat him in record time.




TOMB RAIDER
SWAMPED.
BULLETS CARVE THE AIR AND CUT A DEADLY ATMOSPHERE...
TENTH ONE GOES DOWN !
BUT THE BRAIN-DEAD AREN'T SO EASY TO KILL...
BEAT THAT!
AAH!
HMMM ?
RIGHTY-HO !
STREWTH !
NORMALLY THOUGH, A FINER DEGREE OF INCAPACITATION IS REQUIRED...
YOU CAN'T EAT THIS RAW ...



UHMMMM
YOU HUNGRY?
JUST NEED TO POP IT IN THE OVEN A WHILE!
FWOOSH
THE STENCH OF ROTTED BODIES INGNITES IN A BLAST
FHOOM!!
NOOO! STOP PLEASE - IT'S DEATH'S DOOR !
GREAT - THE PLEASURE'LL BE ALL MINE!



BY CORE

RELEASE: SEPTEMBER

PRICE: £44.99

GAME TYPE: SHOOT 'EM UP

BREAK DOWN

ORIGINALITY

CHALLENGE

ACTION

STRATEGY

REFLEXES

1 PLAYERS

OPTIONS

CONTROL
JOYPAD

GAME DIFFICULTY
HARD

CONTINUES
PASSWORD

SKILL LEVELS
1

RESPONSIVENESS
PRETTY LOVELY

ORIGIN

An all-new game from those wily Derbyshire demons.

GAME AIM

Blast the heck out of everything. Guide some trains. Rescue a scientist. Operate a satellite. The usual.

BEAT THIS

SECOND LEVEL

Time was when you knew what you were doing with a game just by the title. Games like Paperboy, or Burger Time, or Don't Pull spelled it out pretty clearly. You delivered papers, or made burgers, or pushed. Nowadays though, with all yer trendy liberal games producers on the scene, those old-fashioned values are right out the window. No, now we get designer names like Exhumed, which sounds like something by Damien Hirst. Why can't these so-called games programmers go back to calling their software things like "Worldwide Soccer '97"?

Anyway, we digress. What Mr Smartypants Blam! Machinehead is about is this bloke called the Machinehead, who has inadvertently made himself a cybergod and destroyed practically the whole human race. You must fire a big nuclear missile at him and blam! You've saved everyone. Now what's that got to do with the title exactly?











GATHER ROUND, CHILDREN...

The story of Blam! is pretty complex. Basically the Machinehead bloke has infected the whole world with a self-replicating nanotechnology virus. You're Kimmy Stride, one of a team of scientists who've developed a vehicle kitted with a nuke (the Vorpal Blade) to destroy MH, but your perverse assistant Orville has strapped you to the bomb and demands you navigate it personally to the Machinehead!

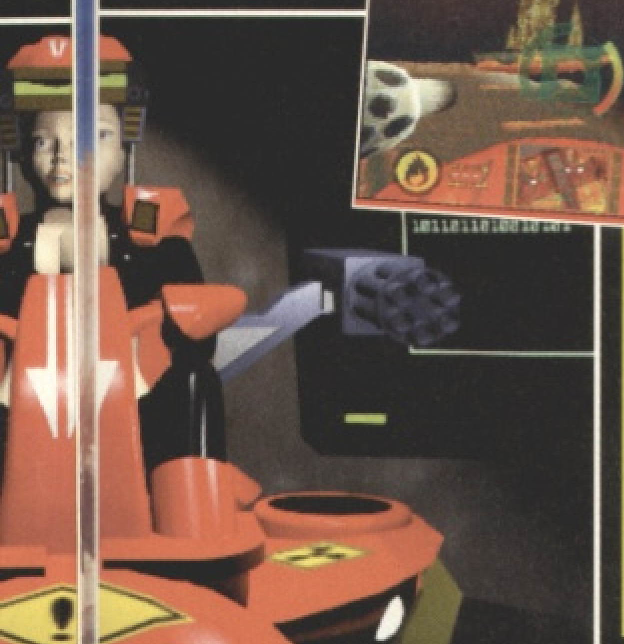










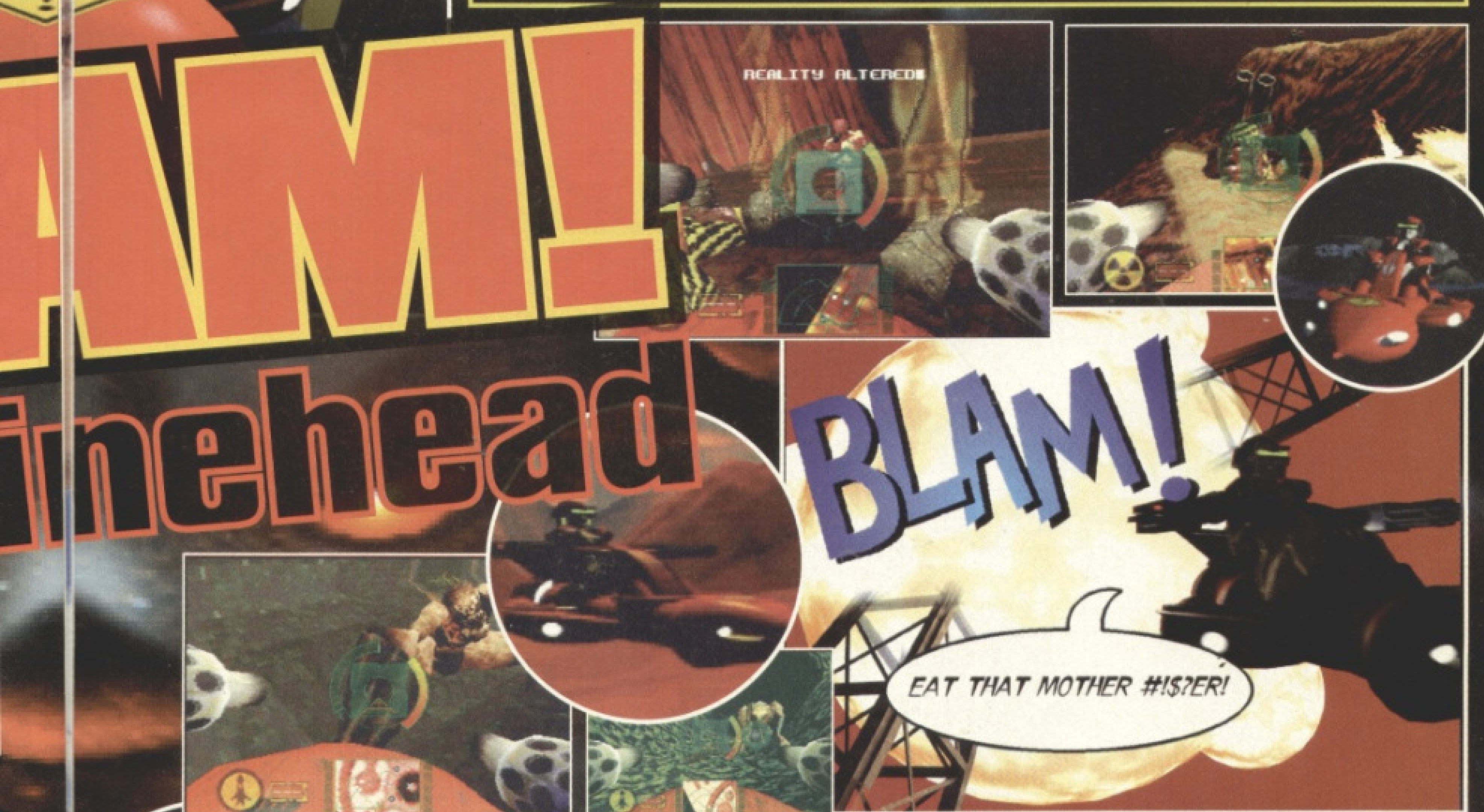






ORIENTEERING CAN BE FUN

Maps in Blam!, are for young sexy people who'd like to stay that way. As well as objectives, they highlight enemies, and their bullets. Keep an eye on the cartography if you want to get anywhere.





UNREALITY BITES

Because the planet is now in the grip of a nano virus, things are a little squiffy. Thus the shape of the world is now subject to laws of Unreality. For example, a mountain which blocks your way can be flattened by finding an Unreality key that corresponds to a numbered Unreality station. With both combined the mountain is removed. Those keys are very well protected, for your inconvenience.







WITH THEIR TANKS

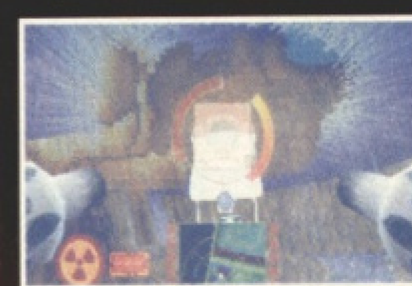
With a prefix like Blam! it's no surprise that this game is absolutely crammed with heavy weapons. You start with Chain Gun and missiles. Pick up extra jollies on the way.



HOMING MISSILES Like missiles, but with added Lock-On.



FLAME THROWER Crap range, but great destructive potential over grouped foes



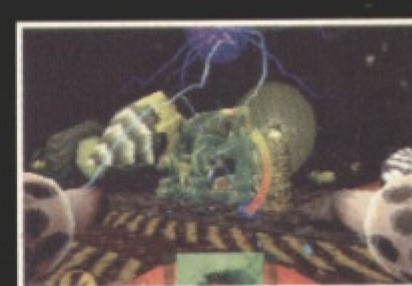
DISRUPTOR A rapid-fire laser gun. Elusive, but killer usage.



LOB A grenade launcher which blows up a large area of scenery/



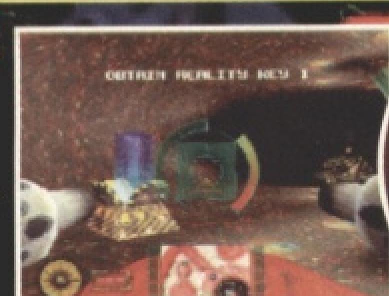
DESTRUKTINOK We made the name up.Knacks just about anything in the area.



ION STORM The smart bomb to end 'em all. Kicks off a lengthy nuclear storm.

REALITY BITES AS WELL

Along with the Unreality, there are also Reality Keys. Far from making the real unreal, they're quite boring. In fact, instead of Reality Keys, they could quite easily just be called Keys, because all they ever do is open doors. Still, they're essential to your progress and shouldn't be mocked.





COMMENT



RAD

Machinehead certainly wins a prize for its groovy name, and probably scoops the Gratuitous Sexism of the Year award as well for its heroine. Whilst Machinehead is definitely playable (once you've gotten used to the tricky controls), the format is similar to Core's Thunderhawk and Shellshock. However, Blam! is superbly executed. The graphics move smoothly, the enemies look absolutely ACE and there's enough to keep both trigger finger and brain active. Not an earth-shattering idea, maybe, but totally enjoyable and the story is cool too.

COMMENT



GUS

In a time when most games have the consistency of spam, Core are still providing large wads of British beef for hardcore gamers. Blam will be lapped up by shoot 'em up fans, who will appreciate the challenge. It also looks excellent in motion: super-smooth. The control method is very tricky, but sophisticated and responsive once you've served an apprenticeship. Although the game idea veers towards the familiar, Blam does seem to offer something new. Much better than Shellshock, it should be said. And I LOVE the music.

GRAPHICS 92

▲A lot of work has gone into designing the monsters.

▼The backgrounds are pretty boring.

ANIMATION 91

▲ Some creatures have most amazingly realistic movement going – especially the spiders.

▼Some monsters hardly move at all.

MUSIC 92

▲There is some.

▼It's a bit dull, really. No offence. It's not bad. But it could have been more atmospheric.

EFFECTS 92

▲Loads and loads of big bangs, along with different death yelps for every foe.

PLAYABILITY 90

▲Once you've learned how to fly your craft it's instinctive and full of death and depth.

▼You may have played a game much like it before.

LASTABILITY 89

▲Loads and loads of missions, which get very hard indeed. Passwords limit frustration.

▼Don't know if you'd return once it's finished..

OVERALL

Blam wouldn't impress your mates with its flashiness or originality, but it delivers solid gaming nourishment all the same.

89

Little Johnny was enjoying the sedate pace of his new lift to school, when...





BY: SEGA

RELEASE: OCTOBER

PRICE: TBA

GAME TYPE: ISOMETRIC

1 PLAYERS

24 MEG

BREAK DOWN

ORIGINALITY

CHALLENGE

ACTION

STRATEGY

REFLEXES

OPTIONS

CONTROL
JOYPAD

GAME DIFFICULTY
EASY

CONTINUES
COLLECTABLE

SKILL LEVELS
1

RESPONSIVENESS
INERTIA!

ORIGIN

The latest in the SONIC series sees Travellers Tales take the spiky blue hedgehog into the third dimension.

GAME AIM

Destroy the badniks, rescue the flickies and deposit them in the giant gold rings.

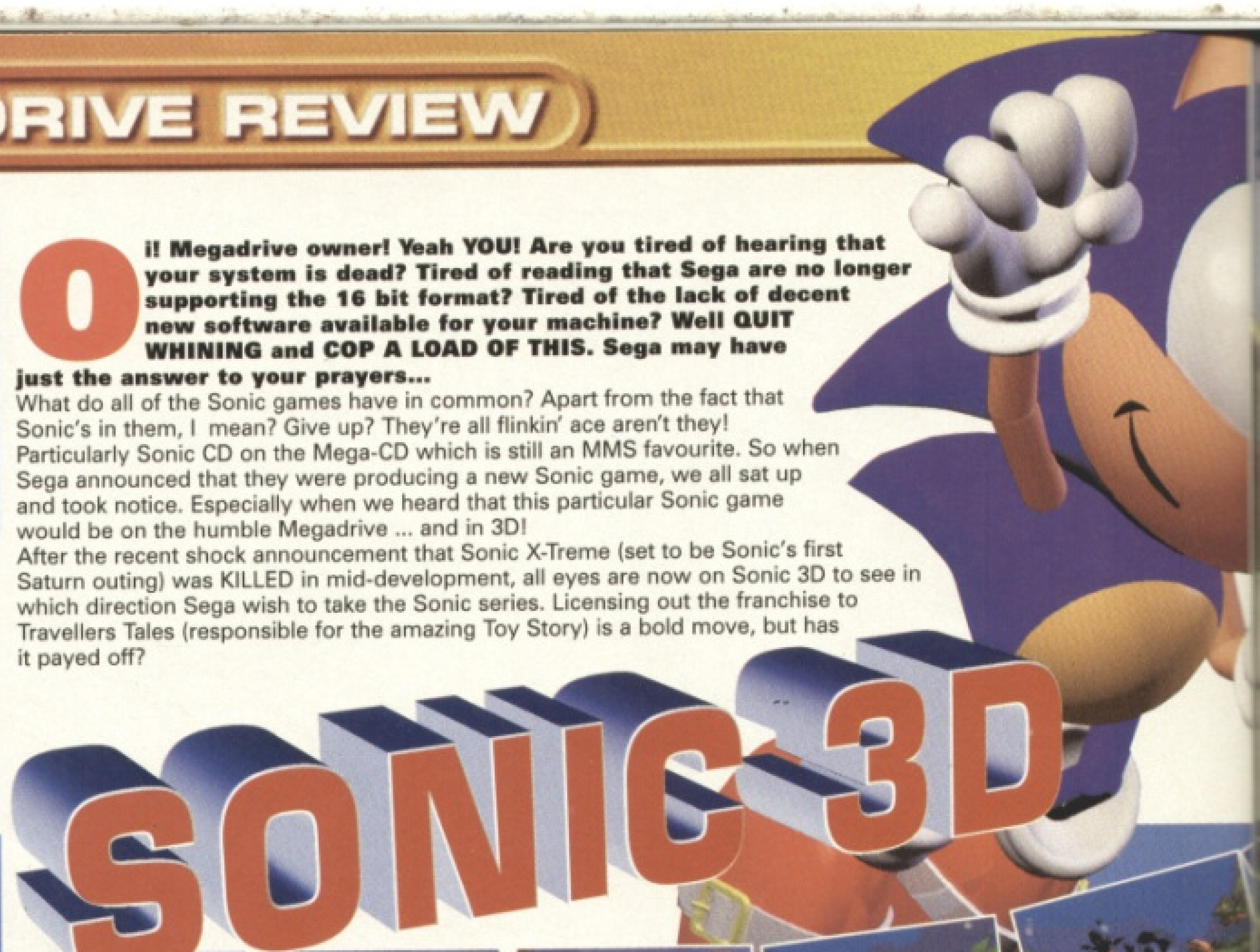
BEAT THIS

Complete the game with all Chaos Emeralds.

Oi! Megadrive owner! Yeah YOU! Are you tired of hearing that your system is dead? Tired of reading that Sega are no longer supporting the 16 bit format? Tired of the lack of decent new software available for your machine? Well QUIT WHINING and COP A LOAD OF THIS. Sega may have just the answer to your prayers...

What do all of the Sonic games have in common? Apart from the fact that Sonic's in them, I mean? Give up? They're all flinkin' ace aren't they! Particularly Sonic CD on the Mega-CD which is still an MMS favourite. So when Sega announced that they were producing a new Sonic game, we all sat up and took notice. Especially when we heard that this particular Sonic game would be on the humble Megadrive ... and in 3D!

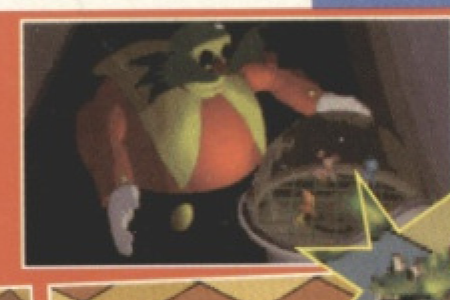
After the recent shock announcement that Sonic X-Treme (set to be Sonic's first Saturn outing) was KILLED in mid-development, all eyes are now on Sonic 3D to see in which direction Sega wish to take the Sonic series. Licensing out the franchise to Travellers Tales (responsible for the amazing Toy Story) is a bold move, but has it payed off?





I'M DA BOSS!

What would a Sonic game be without Dr. Robotnik (Eggman in Japan) and a full complement of his evil minions? Sonic 3D's many levels are absolutely chokka with dastardly robots and treacherous traps which vary depending on the theme of the zone. What's more, the end zone bosses in Sonic 3D are some of the most spectacular Doctor Robotnik encounters yet seen in a Sonic game! Have a look for yourself!



GREEN GROVE ZONE

The first zone is pretty easy going, filled with docile badniks and easily located secrets. The perfect place to get to grips with controlling Sonic and collecting Flickies. The first Dr. Robotnik drops a spiky ball which bounces after Sonic.





SPRING STADIUM ZONE

Spring Stadium is Sonic 3D's 'pinball' stage, with bumpers and lights galore. One of the more recent additions to Sonic 3D, this zone is made particularly tricky by the large numbers of spikes on the floor. Dr. Robotnik's floating bubble capsule has gained a pair of arms in an attempt to squash Sonic flat!

RUSTY RUIN ZONE

Sonic ventures into an Aztec maze full of ancient ruins and crumbling platforms. Similar in appearance to the Aquatic Ruin Zone in Sonic 2, Rusty Ruin Zone introduces the player to Sonic's rock-breaking pirouette move. Dr. Robotnik attacks in the form of a giant statue, and Sonic must use its stone arms as platforms to reach the vulnerable head portion.





PULL THE BIRDS!

While the structure of Sonic 3D remains much the same as in previous Sonic games (each zone has two stages followed by a boss) the game objective has changed significantly. Rather than just have Sonic dash for the end of each level (as with previous Sonic games), this time Sonic must first locate and collect a number of Flicky birds which he needs to open the stage exit. These birds are hidden within the robotic shell of enemy Badniks, and only by successfully Spin Dashing them can Sonic free the fluffy Flickies into his possession. This adds an element of exploration to the game, as Sonic must search the various levels high and low to find the elusive birds.



Locate the enemy badniks.



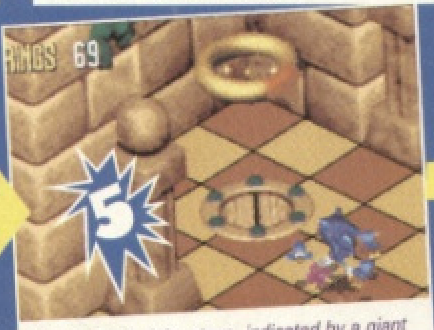
Pop them to reveal a flicky bird!



Collect the flicky by touching him. He will follow Sonic until either he, or Sonic, is hit.



Collect the full quota of flickies! Check the indicator at the bottom right of the screen.



Find the end of the stage, indicated by a giant goldren ring.

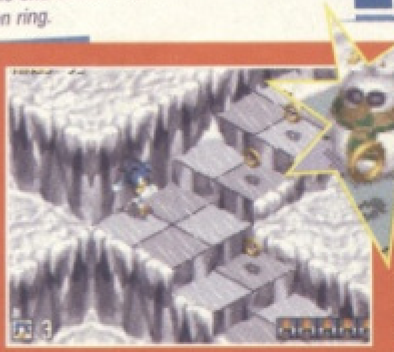


Deposit the flickies and stand on the trap door! A lift will take you the next stage. Go Sonic!

DIAMOND DUST ZONE

A genre standard 'ice' zone with slippery floors, smashable spikes and ice flows. Lumps of snow hide crucial bouncy platforms, while the badnik contingent is largely made up of snowmen that turn Sonic into a lump of ice! He of the large body and stick legs attacks in his bubble capsule again, this time with multiple snowball firing cannons and exploding snowmen!

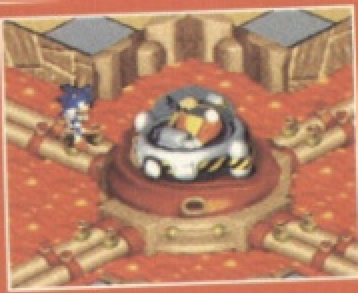












VOLCANO VALLEY ZONE

Fire! Fire! This zone is surrounded by bubbling magma which can prove fatal to an unprotected Sonic. Flame jets and spiky badniks make holding on to a long chain of Flickies particularly tricky, while smashing certain destructible rocks reveals hidden tunnels to secret areas. Smelly old whisker face appears at the centre of a network of narrow pipes along which Sonic must tread in order to reach him.

PANIC PUPPET ZONE

This zone looks similar to the Gene Gadget zone, though the styling is slightly different. Most of the obstacles are the same, though rings and bonuses are harder to come by. This is the toughest zone of all, and only by using all of the techniques you have learned on previous levels can Sonic escape unscathed. This time you can't hit Robotnik directly. A bit of thought is what's needed.











A tricky bit this. One slip and Sonic's history.



You can see Sonic through the glass!


Dodge the rockets and bash Robotnik!

GENE GADGET ZONE

Perhaps the most spectacular looking stage in the game. Metallic panels and pipes line the stage while rotating lasers and electrified pads make the going tough. Sonic can also experience brief periods of weightlessness by moving onto the circular fans situated on the floor. Egg-face appears on a conveyor belt similar to the Wacky Workbench boss in Sonic CD. Dash up the conveyor belt, dodge the spikes and missiles and BOP him one.

CONSOLE CAPERS

Making a return to the world of Sonic are the now familiar power-up consoles, dotted about the landscape. These bonuses are now even more crucial to Sonic's success than ever before, so here's a run down on what to look out for.

SPEED SHOES
Upgrade your shoes for these super speedy custom red turbo-sneakers.

RINGS
Gives Sonic 10 rings in one go, funnily enough. Useful for hitting the 50 ring mark needed to reach the special stages.

INVINCIBILITY
Pop this and Sonic becomes invincible! While the tune lasts at least.

SONIC SHIELD
Gives Sonic a translucent shield which protects him for one hit. Orange shield lets Sonic dash attack, while Red shield protects Sonic from fire.





SONIC BOOM!

One of the Sonic series' key assets has always been its simple 'one button fits all' control system. However, while that was fine for a 2D environment (where Sonic could only move left and right), it doesn't really suit Sonic 3D's isometric universe. To cope with the added dimensions, Sonic 3D introduces a new button to replace the up and down functions on the d-pad. While A and C make Sonic jump as per usual, the B button makes Sonic curl up into a ball and roll (or charge a roll). Sonic can also perform other actions during the game such as pirouettes and loops, though these are moves are only accessed by using certain objects dotted around.



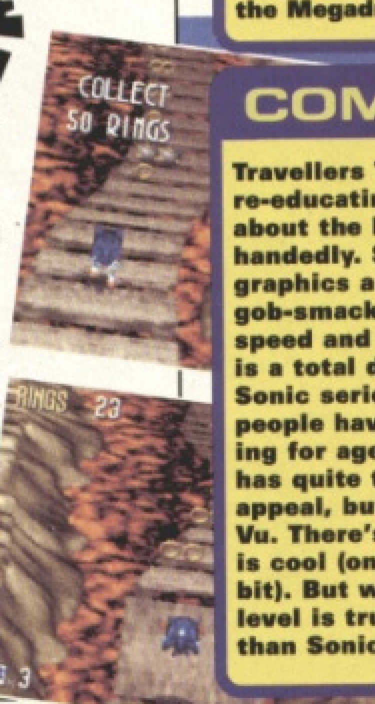
COMMENT

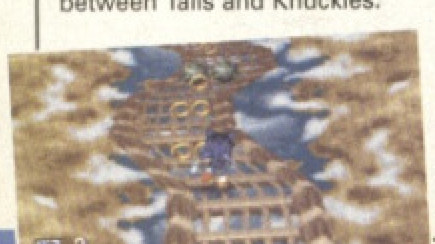


For once I'm speechless. I must admit I was a bit sceptical at the idea of Sonic's first 3D outing appearing on the humble Megadrive, but once again Sega have proved my worries groundless. Sonic 3D is a legitimate addition to the Sonic series, and a smart game in its own right. Yes, the change of game style may deter some Sonic purists, but in my opinion it's about time someone added some depth to Sonic's simplistic 'race to the end of the level' structure. The rendered graphics are fantastic (and not at all inappropriate), the music is surprisingly good and the gameplay is rich and rewarding. Travellers Tales have got the control and inertia of Sonic over the 3D terrain absolutely perfect, and are to be commended. In fact the only sign of rain on this parade is the game's difficulty level: it may be a tad too easy for experienced gamers. Still, I said it with Toy Story and I'll say it again – along as games of this quality keep coming out for the Megadrive, 16-bit WILL NOT DIE!

A BRIDGE TOO FAR!

Like all Sonic games before it, Sonic 3D features an incredible 3D special stage just waiting to be discovered. By collecting 50 rings and locating one of Sonic's hidden pals (Tails and Knuckles) Sonic is warped to a special stage where he must cross a narrow bridge, dodging spikes and collecting rings in order to reach the Chaos Emerald at the other end. There are eight emeralds to collect, and the stages vary slightly between Tails and Knuckles.





COMMENT



Travellers Tales seem to be re-educating the world about the Megadrive single-handedly. Sonic 3D's graphics are a gob-smacking marriage of speed and detail. The game is a total departure from the Sonic series — which some people have been demanding for ages. I don't think it has quite the same instant appeal, but you can't complain about Deja Vu. There's massive depth, the game idea is cool (only the bonus level lets it down a bit). But what Dan says about the difficulty level is true, this is probably even easier than Sonic 1!

GRAPHICS 93
▲Stunning rendered graphics take Sonic into the third dimension.
▼The checkerboard floor is a bit samey.

ANIMATION 93
▲ In a word, amazing. SGI workstations put to good use on the Megadrive – Donkey Kong County eat your heart out!

MUSIC 92
▲Catchy tunes for each zoom, with remixes for the second stage!

EFFECTS 90
▲You'll recognise the effects from previous Sonic games.
▼Not quite the same advance as in other areas.

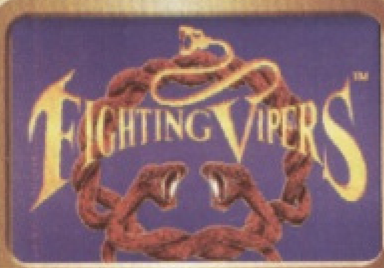
PLAYABILITY 91
▲The control and inertia of Sonic is perfect, and the whole experience is fast, furious fun.

LASTABILITY 90
▲H.U.G.E levels, and there's Chaos Emeralds to think about.
▼It may be a tad easy for experienced gamers.

OVERALL
What's that, from inside the Megadrive coffin? Is that ... breathing? My God, it's still alive! Quick get it out! Get it out!

92


BLAM!...
BLAM! -MACHINEHEAD
available on:
PC CD-ROM
SEGA SATURN
PLAYSTATION
See! through the eyes of Dr Kimberly Stride as you ride the Vorpal Blade through an insane combination of shoot-em-up action, strategic objectives and B-movie melodrama. Gasp! with amazement at state-of-the-art virtual landscapes, tunnel systems and eye-popping FMV. Laugh! in the face of danger as you blast through fifteen adrenaline-pumping stages of sheer 3D exhilaration. Scream! with terror at horrific hordes of mutated polygonal enemies. Beg! for mercy as you face the Machinehead in the mother of all showdowns... Play! Blam!-Machinehead! for the ride of your life.
EIDOS INTERACTIVE
Blam!-Machinehead © Core Design Limited, 1996 All Rights Reserved.
Core Design Limited, 55 Ashbourne Road, Derby DE22 3FS.
CORE



FIGHTING VIPERS

Can it be less than two years ago we were all agog at Virtua Fighter? Now we are beginning to take Saturn games of the standard of Sega Rally for granted. Even so, no-one was quite sure what AM2 would make of their own dynamite one-on-one 3D beat 'em up, Fighting Vipers. Could the Saturn handle even the gameplay, let alone the graphics?
The Japanese version reveals all — and all is what's there — everything apart from removal of the background animations. This is more than made up for by some outrageous features revealed in Pandora's Box fashion.



BY	SEGA (AM2)
RELEASE	NOVEMBER
PRICE	£49.99
GAME TYPE	BEAT 'EM UP

BREAK DOWN

1-2 PLAYERS

ORIGINALITY

CHALLENGE

ACTION

STRATEGY

REFLEXES

OPTIONS

CONTROL
JOYPAD

GAME DIFFICULTY
HARD

CONTINUES
INFINITE

SKILL LEVELS
5

RESPONSIVENESS
INCREDIBLE!

ORIGIN

AM2 convert their own Sega Model 2 coin-op, itself an overhaul of the VF2 principle.

GAME AIM

Defeat, nay demolish, your nine other opponents in a visceral battle.

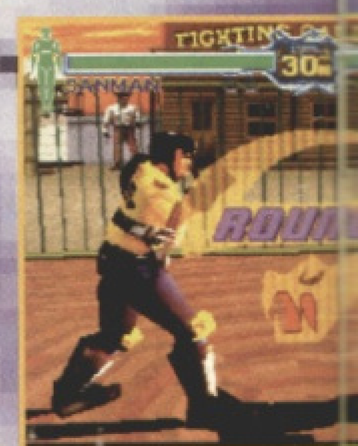
BEAT THIS

10 MINUTES HYPER MODE

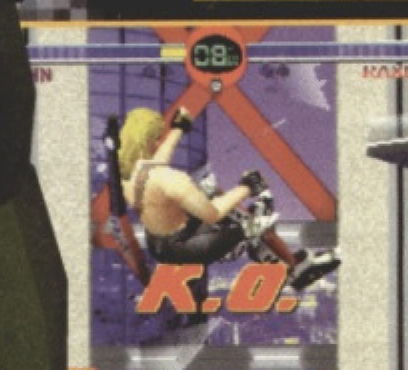












FANGS FOR THE MEMORY

How many times have you whacked a mate's ass on VF2 and wished you could save it to humiliate him at a future date? On Fighting Vipers you CAN! If you happen to have that once-in-a-lunchtime resounding victory, press the L button and the preceding round can be saved into system or cartridge memory, complete with date and time.











GET BIZZY WITH THE FIZZY

Witness the antics of Fighting Vipers celebrity character, Pepsiman. Steely like Dural, but decked out in the soft drink livery, he pops up every so often to challenge you (the music here is hilarious). Sadly Sega UK want to deprive us of Pepsiman for the PAL version and replace him with a bland, uncommercial character. But it won't be the same, fizzy pop fans.



SNAKEBITE

As detailed in our previews, the action of Fighting Vipers is wild enough, but Hyper mode, revealed after your first completion, makes it demonic. In Hyper mode you can strip off all your armour quickly and go into 'custom combo mode'. There is now no limit to the number of moves you can stream into sequence, letting you unleash a furious battery. You can also dodge 3-D style. Hyper mode offers a complete change of pace and style.





RATTLE AND HUM

The Training Mode is comprehensive. Practice against computer drones who stand, move, crouch according to one of eight types. A moves list becomes available with instructions on how to perform each. A move is marked off once successfully performed, with a surprise if you bother to do the lot.

ONCE BITTEN

Once you complete the game, rendered artwork of the character you played with becomes available on the options screen.

COMMENT



DAN

Hats off to AM2 for once again producing an astounding conversion of a top-of-the-range arcade machine. Every time we think we've seen all the Saturn is capable of, along comes Sega to prove otherwise. But Fighting Vipers is more than just a technical marvel - it's a brilliant game in its own right. While obviously owing a huge debt to VF2, a more accessible control system makes Fighting Vipers a lot easier to get to grips with, while the sharp, staccato nature of the fighting makes the gameplay seen even more brutal. Add to that the wealth of Saturn only extras and Fighting Vipers becomes an essential purchase.

COMMENT



GUS

Yes! Yes! Yes! Since Fighting Vipers has come in I've been mad for it, even if I was never as good at VF2 as some others. Fighting Vipers appeals to me more immediately than VF2 because the characters are groovier, the action faster and more vicious. All the added features listed here (and there are more) came as a great surprise, and by any valid console comparision, the graphics and sound are awesome. Even if you have Virtua Fighter 2, in fact especially if you have VF2, you must have this game.

GRAPHICS 93

▲Fantastic scenery with the imposing trademark walls.

▼The characters are lower resolution than VF2 but look better. Stunning replays.

ANIMATION 94

▲The movement is so incredibly detailed, you take it for granted until you see one of Raxel's throws or a close-up replay.

MUSIC 90

▲Tokio's airport scene music is classic, as is Grace's skate pop.

▼The rock stuff lends the game its grungy feel.

EFFECTS 91

▲Loads of grunting and groaning and the sickening sound of rattling steel.

▼Really heavy armour-busting impact noises.

PLAYABILITY 96

▲More violent and more instantly attractive than VF2.

▼The incredible speed is mixed with smart, sophisticated combat gameplay.

LASTABILITY 92

▲A huge array of modes, Playback, hidden characters and costumes, time records and ultra-hard opponents.

OVERALL

It could be a huge struggle to work out which is best: 'Vipers or Fighter. Another AM2 game slithers into history.

95

SATU BOMBE



BY HUDSON

RELEASE IMPORT

PRICE IMPORT

GAME TYPE ACTION

BREAK DOWN

ORIGINALITY

CHALLENGE

ACTION

STRATEGY

REFLEXES

1-10 PLAYERS

OPTIONS

CONTROL
JOYPAD/MULTITAP

GAME DIFFICULTY
MEDIUM

CONTINUES
INFINITE

SKILL LEVELS
1

RESPONSIVENESS
OKAY

ORIGIN

Hudsonsoft invented Bomberman on the NES. And they're still making them today.

GAME AIM

Plant bombs around the maze in a bed to incinerate your enemies in the blast.

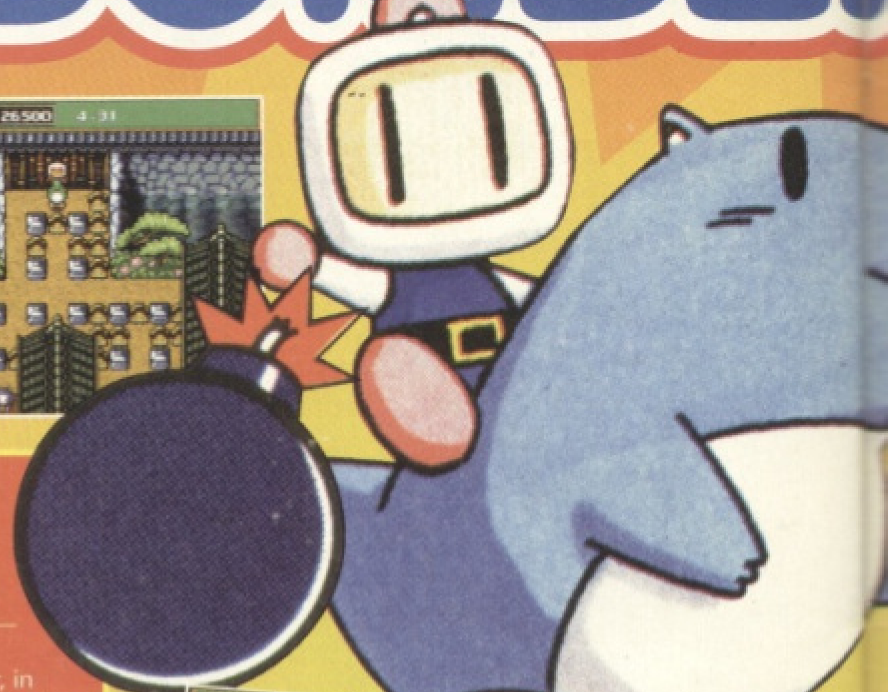
BEAT THIS

WORLD 2-8

A few, fortunate games build their reputations on gameplay alone. Hudsonsoft's Bomberman series is a portion of that favoured few. Even in its earliest days, the graphics and presentation of Bomberman were spartan in comparison with other Gameboy/NES titles. And it's the same on the Saturn, though Bomberman has come of age in terms of complexity and ingenuity. Still, some people unacquainted with the gameplay may need guidance on why, on this occasion, 2-D triumphs.



Mad hippos, Japanese gardens, I don't know.



MASTER BLASTER

Bomberman's game concept is singular — plant bombs. Every bomb your midget bomber drops will explode seconds later, in horizontal and vertical blast zones, according to the open space around it. This effect is put to use to destroy walls and enemies, and in the multi-player game, other players. Of course, the blast does not discriminate, so you could fall victim to your own device.





COMMENT



GUS

All that's strong and all that's weak about Bomberman is contained herein. Short of attempting some kind of 3D debacle, you can't really expect Hudsonsoft to do much more with the concept. The reason to buy Bomberman is the multiplayer mode. Two player is okay, get above that and its excellent stuff that you'll come back to time and again because it's easy to set up and play for 10 minutes or an hour. The single player game is not nearly so compulsive, but the version here is as varied as possible. Even the infinite continues don't spoil a very challenging lone mode.

URN ERMAN



COMMENT



Bomberman is, was, and always will be a multiplayer game. No matter how much effort Hudsonsoft put into the one player 'quest' mode, it will always be seen as a distraction from the real deal: Tournament Mode! Four player Bomberman is an essential experience for anyone with an interest in games, and provided you have four pads, a multitap and four mates its a brilliant way to spend an evening. 10 player Bomberman is even more hectic, though I doubt that most of you will have the resources. If you're going to make the most of the multiplayer option, then Saturn Bomberman is an essential purchase.



GANG BANG

Only a nutcase would prefer Bomberman's story mode to the legendary multi-player game. This takes place on a simple, themed maze, with human players attempting to bomb each other out of the game. It's fast, furious and incredible fun. Bomberman Saturn takes it to ridiculous levels by allowing TEN players at once. You need ten joypads, two multi-taps and a minibus.









HAND SHANDY

The consolation for lone players is that this is the most imaginative Story Mode Bomberman has ever had. Dozens of levels, all linked, graphically themed and with lots of little features unique to a particular level. The objective is to destroy the pillars, and acquire enough powers to take on the end-of-level boss.

THE COLLECTOR

Single bombs are pretty unexciting, but Bomberman offers the widest imaginable range of empowering features, hidden as little icons, released when a part of the wall is destroyed. If you know Bomberman, the Saturn version has all previous powers plus some. If you don't, peruse this selection:

BOMB

You can lay an additional bomb for every bomb icon you collect.





FLAME

The blast area for each bomb is increased with each of these.

LEG

You can kick your bombs along the passages.





POWER

Power bombs unleash an awesome explosion.

SKULL

Multi-player only. Makes the player act erratically or contract bomb diaorrhea!





SKATE

Go faster.

VEST

Heralds a period of invincibility.





EGG

hatches one of five dinosaurs, each with a custom power of their own.

GRAPHICS 80

▲The epitome of all things miniature and cute. Lovely themed areas in the story mode.

▼Titchy, flat and not very next gen.

ANIMATION 62

▼Hardly noticeable on the game figures — they're too small. The game's main feature is speed.

MUSIC 90

▲The composer(s) have let their imagination go wild, with trip-hop-pop arrangements that drive the game forward.

EFFECTS 78

▲Boom, bang-a-bang.

PLAYABILITY 86

▲Multi-player is classic gameplay.

▼Single player mode is an acquired taste.

LASTABILITY 81

▲If you have mates, you have months of fun ahead.

▼If you don't, you don't deserve to have fun, do ya?

OVERALL

The best version of Bomberman there has ever been. That can't be a bad thing.

85



BY	SEGA
RELEASE	OCTOBER
PRICE	£44.99
GAME TYPE	GOLF SIM

BREAK DOWN

1-4 PLAYERS

ORIGINALITY

CHALLENGE

ACTION

STRATEGY

REFLEXES

OPTIONS

CONTROL
JOYPAD

GAME DIFFICULTY
MEDIUM

CONTINUES
RAM SAVE

SKILL LEVELS
2

RESPONSIVENESS
FINE

ORIGIN

A new golf game engine, nominally part of Gremlin's 'Actua' sports series.

GAME AIM

Same as any golf game. Knock a ball from tee to hole in as few strokes as possible.

BEAT THIS

7TH (TRACK 1, NORMAL SETTING)

actu G

Few games offer an equal chance for humilation as golf. While your partners might drive effortlessly, chip confidently and putt with devastating accuracy, you might hook and slice your way to bogeys of Bart Simpson proportions.

Still, millions of console owners who wouldn't be seen dead with a copy of Fighting Vipers (and thousands who would) queue up to buy the latest attempt to render the ancient game in digital form. Despite many of them looking much of a muchness, and having suspiciously similar control methods, some pitch closer to the flag than others. Actua Golf falls into this category.



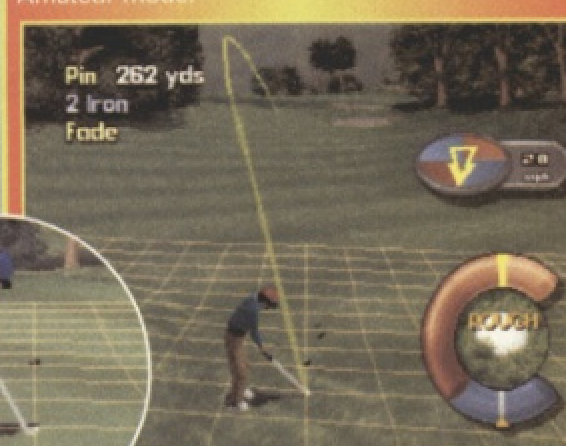


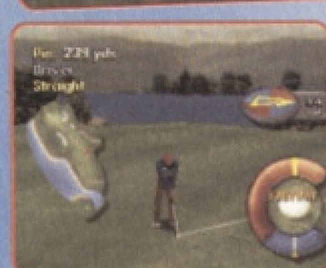




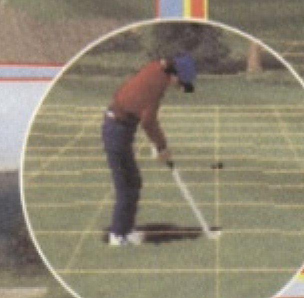
ARC-E-OLOGY

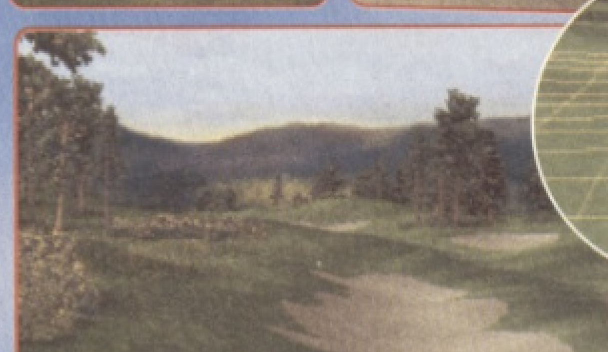
Actua Golf simplifies the main tactical aspect of the golf game – aiming for the hole – with an arc. This transparent curve shows the ideal path of the ball when hit with the selected club (making no allowance for wind). This is not entirely new, but Actua allows you to change the viewing angle so you can see exactly where the arc will land. This feature is useful where the ball will land out of view of the tee, as you can make adjustments for slopes. You can also use the arc to create a marker which indicates when you should stop your swing. But this is only offered in Amateur mode.











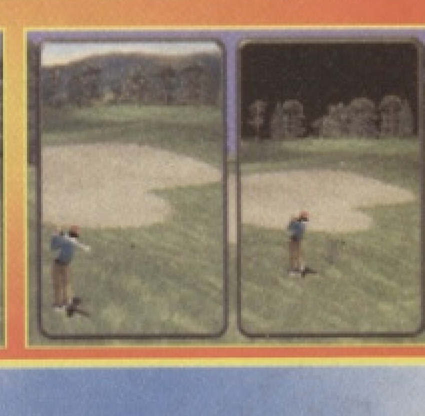




EYE BALLED

You could never miss any action in Actua Golf. Your preparation can be watched from any of a dozen angles, your shot is relayed from an equal number of dramatic positions. These include panning, tracking, reverse, static and ball cam shots. You can mix these randomly by selecting 'Intellicam'. The replay option offers a fresh set of viewing perspectives, including split angle replays.





ua GOLF







PROFESSIONAL TOUCH

Actua's attention to detail is a first in the genre. The programmers have thought enough to show mundane but lifelike aspects, like the golfers removing their balls after sinking a putt. They also show reactions on the green, willing a tense putt to the mark. The landscapes show remarkable detail, even down to independently moving shadows.





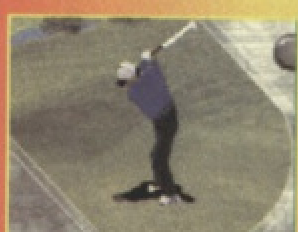
TASTY FOURSOME

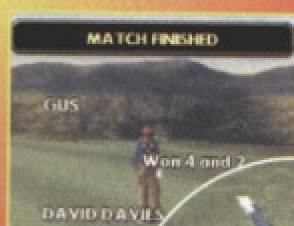
As many sensible play options as you would want are offered; practice from 1-4 players, matchplay (2 players), strokeplay (2-4 players), skins (2 players) Foursome and Fourballs, all leading to the tournament option.

















COMMENT



GUS

Games constantly improve, and sometime someone will improve on this, but Actua Golf is without doubt the best golf game on the Saturn, and by some margin. Finally, programmers who show some real interest in the game with their work, which seems to be assembled from a golfer's mind. The basic control method – stop a power bar twice – is the same as every other, but the flexibility in setting up your shot with the minimal recourse to menus, makes it easy and painless to perform chips onto the green, or draw the ball effectively. Because you can do this easily, you're more likely to bother, unlike most other golf games. The excellent visuals and commentary all add, of course, and again, these have no peer on Saturn. Two courses is not ideal for our greedy gamesters here, but there may be follow-up course discs. In the meantime, golf gamers should not hesitate to buy Actua.

COMMENT



MARCUS

I was a big advocate of Velora Valley Golf, but the only golf game worth buying for Saturn has now been bettered in impressive fashion. A detailed simulation (as opposed to Velora's fantasy golf) Actua bristles with options and graphics that distinguish this is a golfer's golf game. It's not perfect – the usually impressive commentary occasionally gets muddled, especially when there are a number of commentators – but this really is the most sumptuous golf game I've ever seen. An essential purchase for fans.

GRAPHICS 86

▲Detailed, lush courses that are a pleasure to play on with a sensible and wide range of perspectives.
▼Occasional pixelling of very close landscape features.

ANIMATION 84

▲The moving camera offers good and occasionally spectacular views of your shots. The golfer's movement is also very good.

MUSIC 51

▼Very little music apart from a bizarre elevator ditty on the title screen.

EFFECTS 85

▲Not one but three commentaries, the best being from Peter Alliss. You can also mix these for a commentary overdose.
▼The swing and 'whack' and whistle of the ball sounds are not so hot.

PLAYABILITY 93

▲Easier to play, with more depth and subtletly than any other golf game, and more interesting courses.

LASTABILITY 89

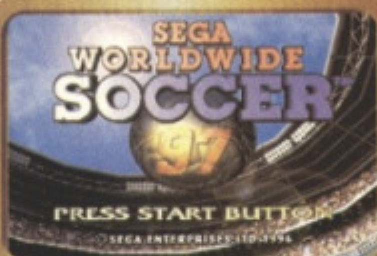
▲The professional mode pushes players again once they've developed their confidence in Amateur status.
▼36 holes is probably 18 too few.

OVERALL

Actua outdrives everything on the Saturn range. The leader in its field.

92

worldwide SOCCER



BY SEGA

RELEASE NOVEMBER

PRICE £44.99

GAME TYPE FOOTIE!

BREAK DOWN

1-2 PLAYERS

ORIGINALITY

CHALLENGE

ACTION

STRATEGY

REFLEXES

OPTIONS

CONTROL
JOYPAD

GAME DIFFICULTY
MEDIUM

CONTINUES
RAM SAVE

SKILL LEVELS
3

RESPONSIVENESS
BRILL!

ORIGIN

Nominally an update of Victory Goal, but in an entirely different league.

GAME AIM

Score goals in realtime, but with more sophisticated elements like team coaching.

BEAT THIS

FINISH THE GAME!

The Japanese hate to be second best at anything, and their 'knob' status at all things football is clearly one they would like to change. And it is changing. Top signings for the J-League, including 'smiling' Gary Lineker and a recent shock victory over Brazil at the Olympics go some way to establishing them as the top nation in Asia.

Jap soccer games have been another area of doubt. Smugly, we've rested on the laurels of our own Sensible Soccer, Euro '96, Striker, whilst ridiculing last year's ill-begotten Victory Goal. But with Worldwide Soccer '97, Sega have snuck up on our soccer games like a lone San Marino striker on a complacent English defence.

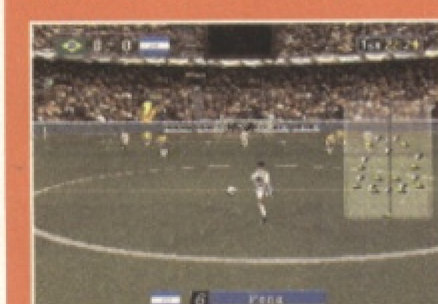


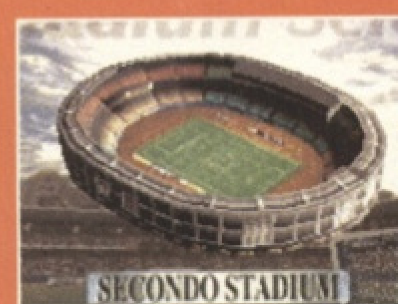


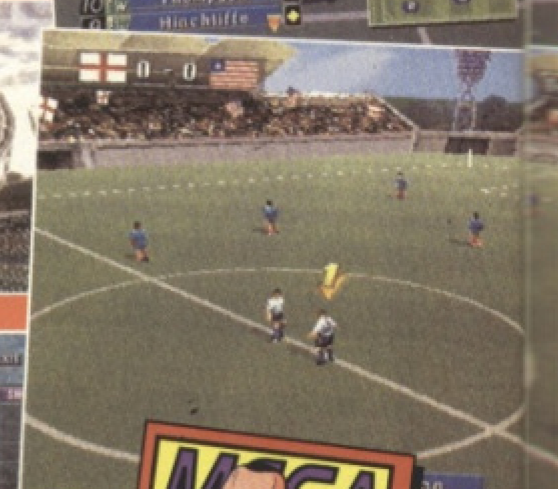
POSITION YOUR PIECES

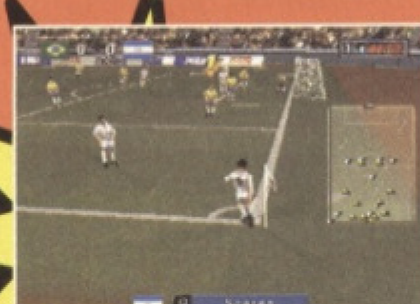
Worldwide Soccer gives you a remarkable ability to influence the actions of the computer-controlled players in realtime, through 'coaching'. The Y and Z buttons combine to offer three directives to your players – to mark other players, move into space upfield, even to create a sneaky offside trap – bring your defenders forward to blunt an attack.















TROPHY MONDO

All Worldwide's 48 team sides are national, with the main tournament a replica of the World Cup. To embark on this epic struggle, take your side through territorial qualifiers in Europe, Nth. America, Sth. America, Asia and Africa. It looks like the programmers have given genuine attributes to the skills of the teams – note the aiming precision of the Germans and the wild speed of Cameroon.







Magnifiucent reaction save there from the Scotland goalie. Must be all the practice he gets.

SHEAR BRILLIANCE

The single aspect that should persuade thousands of Saturn owners to snap up Worldwide is the amazing animation. Players are capable of a host of tricks which they perform with the panache of a Dalgleish, a Keegan, a Pele or a Shearer. The tumbles and tackles look recklessly realistic, the ball control inspired and skilful.



In situations like these it's best just to tonk it, innit?



Coulthard applies her highly developed ducking and diving skills honed at MMS.



At half time the crowd are entertained by an exhibition of celebrity break dancing.



If Gary Bloom says 'he's making some space in midfield' once more, I'm gonna...

COMMENT



GUS

Almost everyone who has played Worldwide Soccer has been blown away by it. Rarely do sports games get the sort of seal of approval it has enjoyed, as everyone has a different idea of what's the most important aspect of a sport. Worldwide offers graphic brilliance and outstanding playability in equal measure. The pace, tension and pressure of the game are just right, with enough space on the field to play a tactical game. It's also the most enjoyable Saturn soccer game to play alone, with smart but fallible CPU sides. You really must buy this title, even if you have every other football game known to man.

COMMENT



MARCUS

With Worldwide Soccer 97 Sega set out to create the definative Soccer sim and guess what? That's just what they've done. SWS 97 is a revelation in sports simulations, perfectly balancing unprecedented realism with intuitive gameplay. It looks like nothing you've ever seen before, plays like nothing you've ever played before, and offers more depth then a dozen Fifa's. This is, without a doubt, the finest footie game I've ever played, and that includes Sensible Soccer and Adidas Power Soccer. The proof of the pudding is in the eating and SWS 97 has football pie all over its shirt. Goaaal!

GRAPHICS 93

▲Impressive stadiums, with flags of the competing nations animated in the crowd. Sensible, playable camera positions.

ANIMATION 93

▲Mint player animation making the sprites more like real people than ever before. Detail and drama with every exertion.

MUSIC 72

▲Follows the current vogue for cheesy menu music.
▼The music in-game adds very little.

EFFECTS 84

▲The commentary by Gary Bloom has a good stab at analysing the action.
▼Too much repetition of phrases to make it work completely.

PLAYABILITY 94

▲ Incredibly easy to pick up and begin playing. As much fun in one-player as with 2, 3 or 4. It has the elusive 'feel' factor sports fans know about.

LASTABILITY 93

▲ The range of functions, 'special moves' and tactical elements is a pukka way of maintaining appeal. Good tournament difficulty structure.

OVERALL

Strength and beauty combine in the best football game you're likely to see before the end of this season.

93

Disney Pinocchio





RELEASE:	OCTOBER
PLAYERS:	1
BY:	SEGA
MEG:	24
PRICE:	TBA
GAME TYPE:	PLATFORM

Category	Score	Comment
GRAPHICS	82	The characters look great, but the backgrounds are sometimes a bit bland.
EFFECTS	75	Nothing to speak of – but it's not that kind of game.
ANIMATION	84	Pinocchio and Jiminy bounce around the screen in impressive detail.
PLAYABILITY	83	Fun, but slightly slow moving.
MUSIC	77	Grating versions of the songs from the film.
LASTABILITY	79	This won't present much of a challenge to seasoned gamers.
OVERALL	82	A modest platformer with only a few nice touches – fun for fans.

He's the little wooden guy with the floppy quiff. His dad's the elderly toymaker and his best mate is a talking grasshopper. Yup, it's Pinocchio and it's Disney time on the Megadrive again.

In this new slab of celluloid-inspired platform fun our wooden hero's adventures closely follow the plot of the film. Which, incredibly, no-one round here seems to have seen. But he goes to school, has some under-water fun, visits the funfair and gets swallowed by a whale. All sounds fairly plausible to us. Each level is linked by a story book detailing Pinocchio's adventures as he runs away from home and tries to avoid getting shredded into match wood by various ne'erdow-ells. Altogether now..."When you wish upon a star, makes no difference who you are..."





COMMENT



MARCUS

Yes, we've seen it all before, yes, it's unbearably cute, no, there's absolutely no opportunity to machine gun anything whatsoever. Right, now we've got all that out of the way, what's Pinocchio actually like? It looks very bright and tidy, and the principal characters are faithful and cheeky representations of their screen counterparts. The game design varies from the innovative (the little dance sequences set in the theatre are very original, if a bit frustrating) to the over-familiar. The only people likely to find this appealing are exactly the audience it's aimed at – junior gamers who are fond of the film. They won't be disappointed.



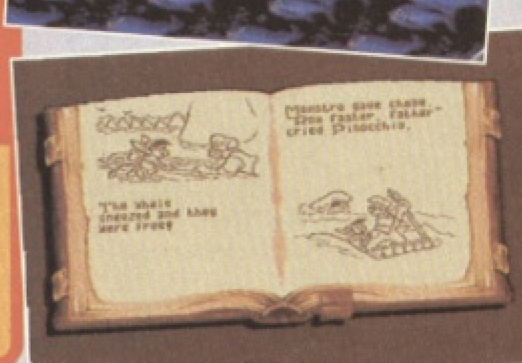
COMMENT



DAN

I'm afraid I don't feel quite as forgiving towards Pinocchio as Marcus does. While it's hardly an offensive piece of software, I'm sick of seeing my favourite Disney movies turned into average platform romps. There are some nice touches, such as the game following the movie's plot, and being able to control Jiminy Cricket on one level, but I wouldn't have it in the house. While I can accept that this game is aimed at a younger audience, I can't really believe that anyone buying a new full price Megadrive game would choose this over Sonic 3D. Sorry.



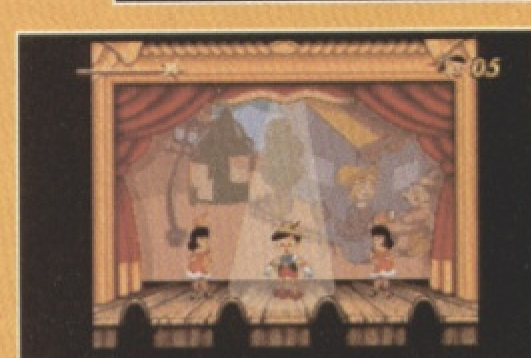


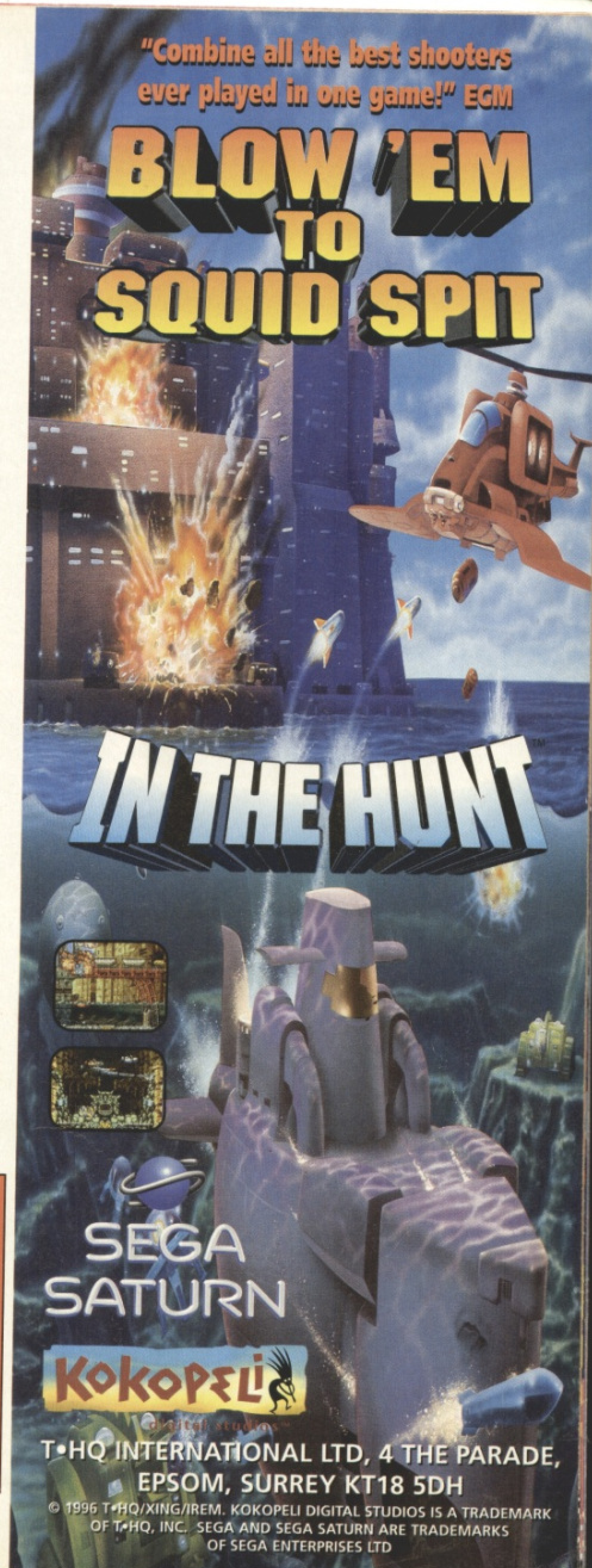
PANIC PUPPET

As well as a mixed bag of game styles there are a couple of really unusual levels – one where you control Jiminy cricket and have to use your umbrella to swat marauding moths and another where Pinocchio is the star attraction in a little theatre. You can only progress to the next level by exactly copying the moves of your various partners, whether they be ballet dancers or whirling Cossacks. Succeed and you'll get a round of applause – fail and you'll get pelted with tomatoes!









"Combine all the best shooters ever played in one game!" EGM
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BY PSYGNOSIS

RELEASE OUT NOW

PRICE £44.99

GAME TYPE RACING

BREAK DOWN

ORIGINALITY

CHALLENGE

ACTION

STRATEGY

REFLEXES

1 PLAYERS

OPTIONS
CONTROL JOYPAD
GAME DIFFICULTY HARD
CONTINUES RAM SAVE
SKILL LEVELS 3
RESPONSIVENESS MEDIUM

ORIGIN
One of the first PSX titles by Psygnosis converted by Saturn Wipeout team, Perfect Entertainment.

GAME AIM
Take the line in stock car races, whilst beating the living daylights out of 19 opponent cars.

BEAT THIS
WIN DIVISION 1

Destruction Derby is the closest thing to a drive 'em up you are going to see on the Saturn this year. Racing your clapped-out saloon is almost incidental to forcing other cars into the crash barriers lining the dirt tracks laid out in five vaguely American locations.

Saturn owners are hardly begging for racing games, with a steady stream since Daytona last year, from the serious (Sega Rally, Wipeout) to the silly (Road Rash, Street Racer) and now something in between.




DESTRUCTION DERBY




CROSS YOUR FINGERS

Some of the course layouts make you play the automobile equivalent of chicken, as the layout intersects itself. This makes it all too easy to collide with traffic coming from a right-angle, sending you careering down the wrong path. Although this is virtually unavoidable, the crashes look excellent.






COMMENT



DAN

I'm starting to wonder whether these Saturn Psygnosis conversions are such a good idea after all. Games like Wipe Out and Destruction Derby were designed to show off the PlayStation hardware, and with a substandard conversion like this, it does the inverse for the Saturn. That said, Destruction Derby was never a brilliant game in the first place. Sure smashing other cars up is fun for a while, but the limited game mechanics and narrow tracks keep the game moving at a snail's pace when compared to 'legit' racers like Sega Rally. My advice: wait for Daytona CCE. Its going to be hot!



EDITED HIGHLIGHTS

The replay feature is very watchable, as it lets you construct a set of custom viewing angles from which to review a race/derby. It's very easy to use and not time consuming to set up an awesome sequence. There's no screen litter of scores or times either.

PENALTY POINTS



Metal grinds against metal – the damage is permanent. Taking first place in a Destruction Derby race is only half of it. Another way to score points is to force other cars out of the race. Heavy impacts are rewarded with 'Race Points', with a minor nudge getting a couple of points and full 360 degree spins taking a whopping eight. A diagram in the bottom right shows damage points around your car. It is possible to get hauled out of the race for sustaining too much damage.



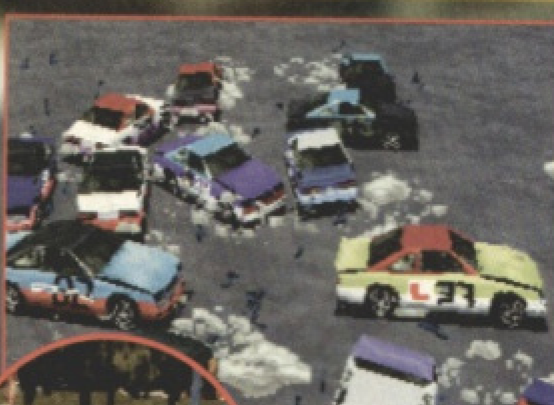
COMMENT



GUS

I was hoping for a conversion of the standard of Wipeout, but for whatever reason, Destruction Derby falls short. The original game had some shortcomings in the longevity department, and was all a bit flat. That said, the nature of the game is different to most other racers and the physics which make the cars crash so spectacularly must be very clever. I also had a fair amount of fun with the Derby and replay options. The most obvious weakness is the graphics — appalling clipping, occasional jerkiness and slowdown and regular glitching make this fall well below the cosmetic standard of most Saturn games.

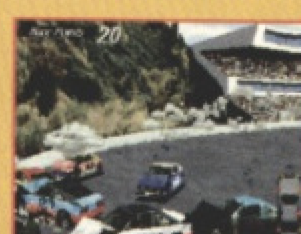




DERBY AND JOAN



Not really a race but a fight to the death. The twenty cars have a massed motor rumble in a 'bowl' arena — a Destruction Derby. The secret for high points and good placings is to spread the damage around your car and survive as long as possible.





OOH... ME PILES

Squeezing twenty cars onto tracks this narrow is a recipe for gridlock.
The pile-ups look great, but can take you out of contention if you get stuck in the centre.

GRAPHICS — 76

▲The cars are nice, and there's lots going on in any race.

▼low resolution and blocky backgrounds.

ANIMATION — 68

▲Spectacular crashes occuring all the time.

▼Very unpolished 3D. Background features appear from nowhere.

MUSIC — 77

▲Intriguing mix of cheese and dance. Drivetime stuff.

EFFECTS — 74

▲The characters' exclamations are funny.

▼The commentator is repetitive. No good smashing noises.

PLAYABILITY — 69

▲The destructive, chaotic element lends DD a distinctive and original appeal.

▼The course are flat and simple.

LASTABILITY — 70

▲The Derby is always good for a laugh.

▼Once you have the measure of the race, it's challenge and appeal wanes.

OVERALL

An immaculate conversion might have made this a contender. But with the company it keeps, it's just an also-ran.

69

REAL BOUT

RELEASE: ....IMPORT	PRICE:........ IMPORT (STEEP)
PLAYERS:......................1-2	GAME TYPE. BEAT 'EM UP
BY: ....SNK	

GRAPHICS	82	High level of detail, but not the highest level of resolution.
EFFECTS	68	The samples sound crude.
ANIMATION	76	Nothing like the smoothness of Capcom's.
PLAYABILITY	75	Nothing to write home about, but plenty of moves.
MUSIC	84	A pleasantly weird array of signature tunes varying between characters.
LASTABILITY	70	About as collectable as locomotive numbers.

OVERALL 73

Somebody will buy this whatever we say, so why say anything?

A small, but dedicated group of game fans keep the SNK torch alight here in blighty, whereas in Japan the company behind NEO GEO is taken rather more seriously.

SNK are something of a curiosity. While everyone and his processor have stampeded into 3D polygon games and new consoles, they keep churning out derivative beat 'em ups for an spellbound audience of King of Fighters, Art of Fighting, Fatal Fury and Samurai Shodown fans. However, the respect with which they are held goes some way to explaining why Sega licensed them to convert these very games with an expensive ROM cart required as well as a CD.

Real Bout is an unreconstructed SNK game of the old school. Defenders would argue that a lot of the features that make their way into Capcom beat 'em ups are developed in SNK's games first. But what about Real Bout?

CART ON TOP

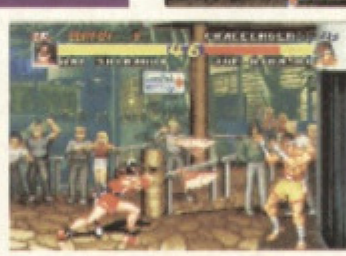
Real Bout is the second game SNK have produced which uses a cartridge with the CD. Unlike King of Fighter '95 which used ROM, this is a RAM cartridge that uploads further data from the disc. The initial outlay is high for this package, but you should be able to use the RAM



PLANE CRAZY

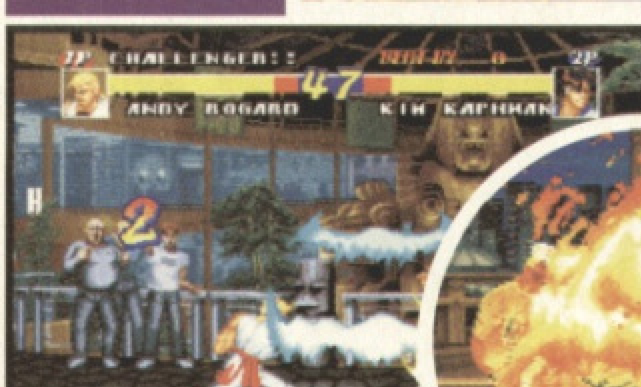
The fighting action takes place on three separate planes; background, mid and foreground. A separate button on the pad controls mpvement between the planes for dodging attacks. You can attack across planes with diagonal special moves.



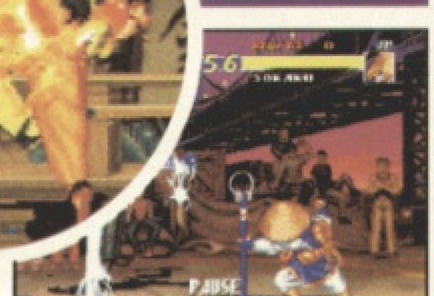


KNOW NO BOUNDS

Taking the 'ring out' idea from 3D fighters, Real Bout allows you to push your opponent into an instant forfeiting out-of-bounds position. But there's normally something else in the way, so player's must propel their quarry through these barriers with a flurry of special attacks.











OLD PROS

If you've played previous SNK fighting games you'll recognise characters like the Bogard brothers, Geese Howard, Joe Higashi and Mai Shiranui.

COMMENT



MARCUS

For some people the Nineties just haven't happened. While Yu Suzuki and his mob have been working away on the virtual experience, the Real Bout team have come up with yet another 2-D beat 'em up. The feature, and is some ways the problem with SNK beat 'em ups is they don't have the same cool Nippon style of Capcom's Streetfighter series, or the guts of the Mortal Kombat games. They're something in between, and the features that Real Bout has which will appeal to the ultra-NEO GEO enthusiast will be lost on 90% of gamesplayers.

COMMENT



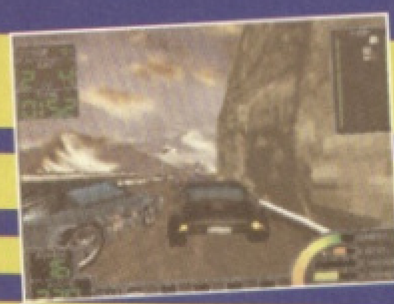
GUS

I've no particular fetish for SNK games, and I don't think the vast majority of gamers do. At their best, they're well crafted beat 'em ups; at worst boring piles of crap. To my mind, this improves on the much overrated King of Fighters, whilst coming nowhere near the classiness of the recent Capcom games. You don't need Real Bout.



It doesn't seem to be enough to push a car around a track any more – punters demand the extra thrills of rally driving (Sega Rally), digi-babes (Highway 2000) and the County Rangers (Need For Speed) to spice up their road rage.

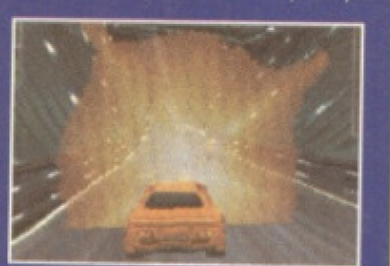
JVC have risen to the challenge with Impact Racing, a driving/shoot 'em up hybrid that sees you haring around a number of courses, blowing away the traffic with everything from lasers to heat-seeking missiles and mines. The courses range from a familiar urban landscape to a snowy track and, erm, deep space. Full marks for originality at least. There's a wide variety of high-powered cars, an armory of weaponry and plenty of power-ups for both to pick up on the way. Good scores are rewarded with the chance to soup up your car with laser cannons and smart bombs, all of which can be activated against your opponents. So just be careful next time you go for those Opal Fruits in the glove compartment...





ROAD HAZARDS

Clearing each level depends on maintaining energy/armour levels and driving extremely fast. If you destroy each course's target number of cars then you'll get a tunnel-bound bonus stage before you tackle the course. Destroy a certain number of cars with the bonus level's time limit and you'll be rewarded with a new piece of weaponry.



RELEASE: ....NOVEMBER	PRICE:........................ £44
PLAYERS:........................1	GAME TYPE:...... DRIVING /SHOOT 'EM UP
BY: ....JVC	

Category	Score	Comment
GRAPHICS	87	Not as busy as other driving games, but a lot more imaginative.
EFFECTS	85	The more exotic weapons are very impressive.
ANIMATION	85	Extremely smooth and fast.
PLAYABILITY	81	Great driving game, good shoot 'em up.
MUSIC	84	Above average drive-time tunes.
LASTABILITY	73	There are only three basic courses, and they could be longer.

OVERALL 80

A compelling mix of game genres. Impact Racing is a top notch novelty racer.



COMMENT



GUS

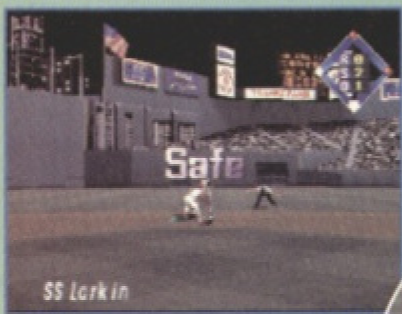
Marcus and I had to majorly disagree on something before he left, and this is it. Why he holds a light up for Impact Racing is beyond me. If I want a racer I get Sega Rally, if I want a shoot 'em up, I get, well anything apart from Impact Racing. The graphics, granted, are pretty silky, but the settings (bar space) look like an A-road through the Pennines. Neverthelees, it appeals to some.

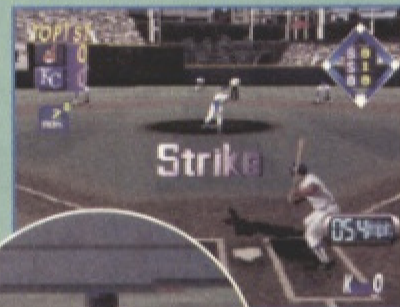
COMMENT



MARCUS

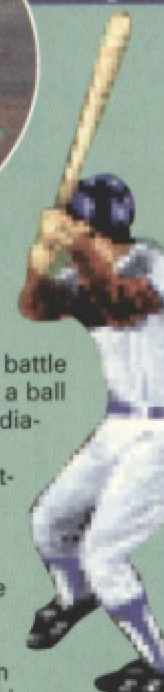
With success dependant on a combination of skilful driving and shooting accuracy, Impact Racing is a genuine multi-genre game that does pretty well on both scores. Impact Racing's graphics are fast and smooth – at least on a par with Need For Speed – but it usually achieves this with high-walled courses and cliff faces that limit the trackside detail. The short cuts don't register once you're into the game, although the limitations of the courses and the repetition in gameplay are slightly off-putting. Overall, this isn't in the premier league of racing games, but I've been having a lot of fun playing it.



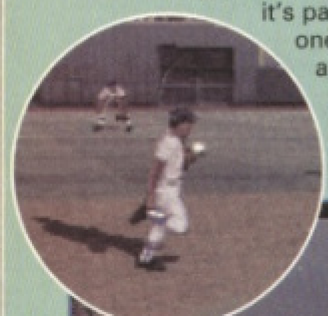




Baseball bats aren't just useful for inflicting grievous bodily harm on innocent passers-by and for hiding behind pub bars ("Just in case of aggro, know what I mean?"). They're quite handy for America's favourite sport.



Baseball is basically rounders played by men wearing tight trousers and funny little hats. Two teams of nine do battle on a diamond-shaped pitch. The defending team pitches a ball at the opposing batter who launches into a circuit of the diamond once he's hit the ball. He runs from base to base, scoring a point for a complete circuit. He can be interrupted by watchful fielders, who can retrieve or catch the ball, knocking him out. That's basically it, and it's pants to be honest. That's why no-one in this country plays it, why there are only a handful of US baseball games released here and why every time we review one of them we have to explain what baseball is.



RELEASE: ....NOVEMBER	MEG:..............................CD
PLAYERS:....................1-2	PRICE:..................... £44.99
BY: ....SEGA	GAME TYPE:.... BASEBALL

GRAPHICS 87
Stadiums fall apart a bit close-up but the players are very detailed.

EFFECTS 81
Options noises are good, but the in-game stuff could have been beefier.

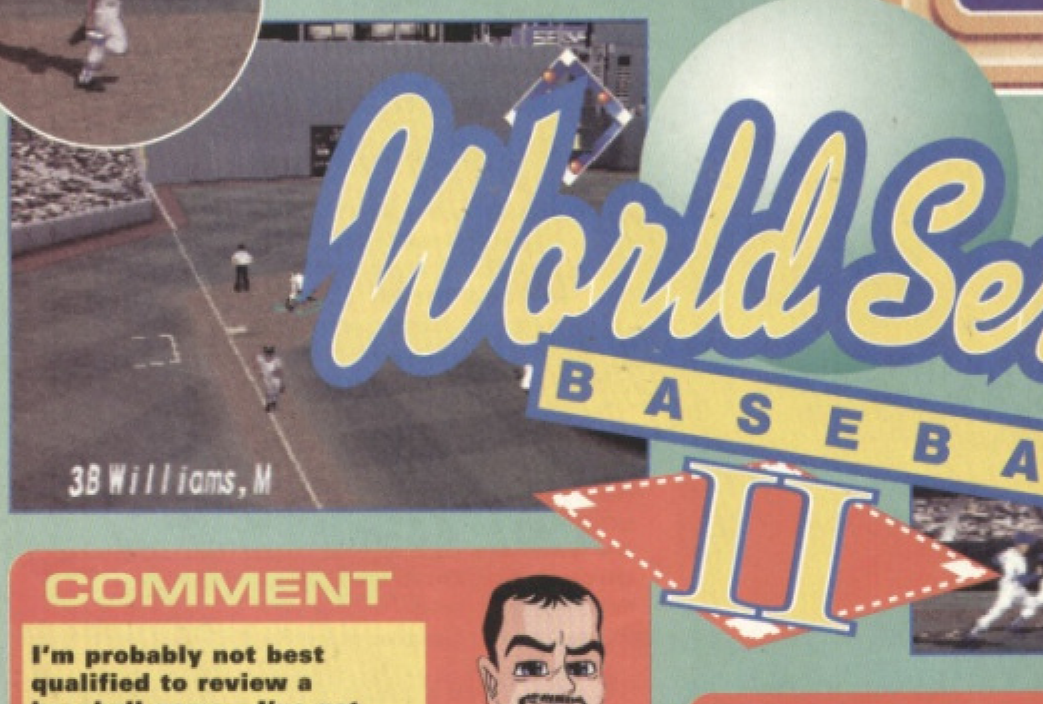
ANIMATION 82
Batting and running is very fluid, and personalised to each player.

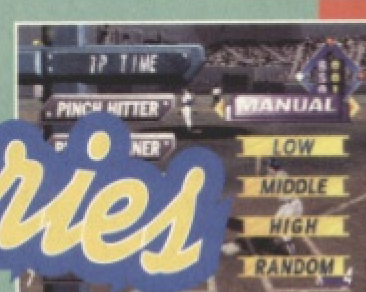
PLAYABILITY 84
It's a good game of baseball, with nearly all the trimmings.

MUSIC 74
The horribly weedy organ music is back.

LASTABILITY 80
There's a lot to get into here – it's worth exploring.

OVERALL 83
The best baseball game yet is flawed but fun.

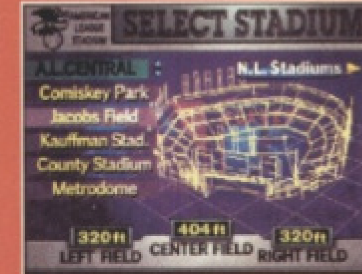






PLAY BALL!

World Series II positively bristles with more options and stats than you can shake a stick at. Five stadiums are recreated in impressive detail, and once you've chosen your venue you can select such variables as weather conditions or night-time games. In-game camera positions can be set to low, medium, high or random positions, while replays follow particularly spectacular action. Get bored of playing baseball and you can switch to an option that allows you to watch it instead with selected league highlights in high quality FMV.



COMMENT



MARCUS

I'm probably not best qualified to review a baseball game – I've got absolutely no interest in the sport – but I was quite impressed with World Series II. While it offers few significant improvements over the first World Series game, its clearest advantage over Acclaim's Frank Thomas Big Hurt is in the graphics department – the players, in particular, look good. The same old baseball problems are apparent though – unlike most simulations of football or tennis, you still get the impression that success is perhaps too reliant on initiating a series of pre-determined routines that you have too little control over. Better is surely to come – in the meantime, World Series II wins the league.

COMMENT



GUS

Last year's World Series Baseball was the best attempt yet at bringing the sport to console. In the meantime, a couple of other contenders have arrived, but none have bettered Sega's game, until this, merely an update of Sega's game. I struggle to see any radical new elements, only graphic tweaks and stat changes (which will surely be missed by all but a few diehard baseball fans in this country). A game designed only to excite fans of a peculiar sport, but accomplished despite that.

The Three Dirty Dwarves in question come from inside the role-playing game of four imaginative kids who are being watched closely by Army Intelligence, as one of them has developed an inter-dimensional gate. This imaginary device sucks the dwarves into the 'real world' along with orc-ish mutants that threaten the stability of the United States from the ghettos of New York. The kids are nabbed by the army ane the dwarves have to save them by using kit found in Al's Sport Shop in the Bronx. Yes it is the silliest plot for a beat 'em up on the Saturn, but it does have three player action. So...





3 DIRTY DWARVES

RELEASE: ....JUNE	MEG:.............................. 4
PLAYERS:.........................1	PRICE:......................... TBA
BY: ....US GOLD	GAME TYPE:...... DRIVING

GRAPHICS 82
Pleasantly different chunky graphic style and large-scale sprites.

EFFECTS 71
The samples are not of a great quality.

ANIMATION 74
The dwarves move well and the background scaling is interesting.

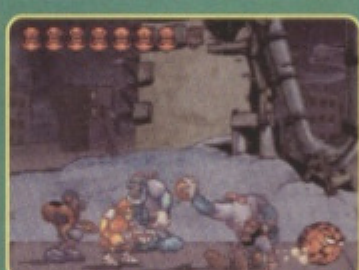
PLAYABILITY 69
The three character select system is unique, the action relentless.

MUSIC 75
American, if that appeals to you.

LASTABILITY 66
Very hard, even with unlimited continues.

OVERALL 66
3DD Shoots itself in the foot early on, with grinding gameplay and limited scope for player expression.

CHANGING DAYS



The programmers have tried to vary Three Dirty Dwarves by mucking about with all kinds of gamestyles. Although the main thrust is 2-D Streets of Rage-style beat 'em uppery, there's 3-D sections, and single-screen stages playing like bonus rounds, mine carts etc.

TOOLED UP

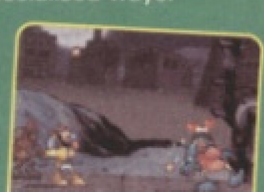
Each character's weapons is employed in various ways during the street-fight. The simplest method is to bash enemies over the head with what you have to hand, but the weapons can be employed in more specialised ways.







BASEBALL BAT
Can whack home run-paced balls into the faces of your foes, and skilful players can launch a salvo of four at once.



FOOTBALL
Rolled along the ground to up-end anyone standing in your path, whilst disposing of most inanimate obstacles.



SHOTGUN
Fires off an unlimited supply of cartridges, one of which is enough to blow most creatures away.



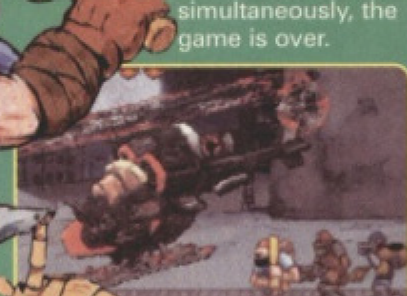
THREESOMES!
The Dwarves get into action using a special attack power, and turn into a formidable scrum formation.



DREAM TEAM

The player selection works in a variety of mystifying ways. For a single-player game it's simple enough — you lead one dwarf and the others follow, with the option to switch control of the main character. Two players share the dwarfs, with a spare character selectable by either. Three players, naturally, take one. In any of these games, if all three dwarfs are stunned simultaneously, the game is over.





COMMENT



DAN

I'm one of the few people who actually likes scrolling beat 'em ups. Final Fight, Streets of Rage, Die Hard Arcade - they all get my adrenalin pumping. Unfortunately, 3DD commits the cardinal sin having both frustrating gameplay, AND a cripplingly narrow play field. The graphics are nicely detailed and smoothly animated, the sound is acceptable, and there are some clever ideas on the later levels. But at the end of a day, 3DD just isn't as satisfying as other genre entries. Save you cash for Die Hard.

COMMENT



GUS

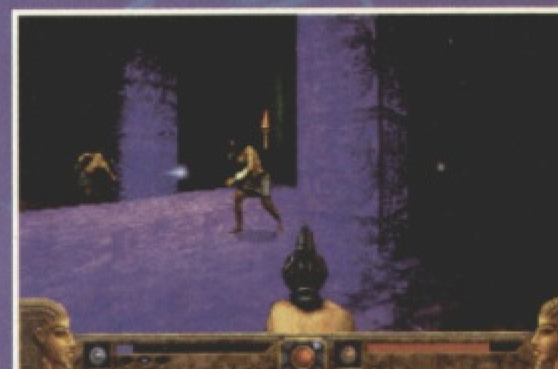
Three Dirty Dwarves thinks it's so funny, but there's little to smile about when you're trying to get to grips with the damn thing. 3DD is double-D difficult due to the narrowness of the actual playing area, which is little more than a mere path at the bottom of the screen. It's a shame, as some later levels have had a lot of work put into designing strange adversaries. The saving grace is the genuine variety in the Dwarves' fighting styles, pity they don't get the space to really work them.

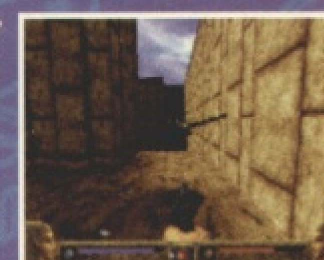
SEGA SATURN

OUT NOW

EXHUMED
SEGA
£44.99
1 PLAYER
DOOM







Developers Lobotomy used the engine from the awesome PC game Duke Nukem 3D for Exhumed – a sophisticated Doom clone set in Egypt. You are Leigh Singer, an archaeologist exploring the tombs of Karnak, trying to prevent a demonic scheme to resurrect the body of King Rameses III. Exhumed has a lot going for it – the mechanics of the game are more advanced than competitors Doom and Alien Trilogy (you can look up and down), the sound effects are superb, and the game structure has more in common with RPGs than linear level-to-level shoot 'em ups. A central section is linked to a number of subsidiary 'hub' levels which you can visit to procure artefacts and weaponry that may become useful when you retrace your steps. The strength of Alien Trilogy's license may mean it eclipses Exhumed this Christmas, but Sega's Egyptian adventure really is the more absorbing game.

OUT NOW













OVERALL **94**

The most sophisticated and impressive Doom-style game on the Saturn this year. An essential purchase.

BUST-A-MOVE 2
ACCLAIM
£39.99
1-2 PLAYERS
PUZZLE



OUT NOW



Acclaim came up trumps when they picked up the sequel to a Japanese puzzle game no-one's heard of. Bust-A-Move 2 features Bub and Bob, the baby dinosaur stars of Bubble Bobble. These two little fellas have clockwork harpoon guns that shoot brightly coloured balls towards the top of the screen. The advancing wall of accumulating spheres can only be depleted by strategically firing the balls so they connect to similarly coloured balls, thus disintegrating. If you don't make enough 'Connect 4' style links then you'll become overwhelmed and lose. And that, aside from some extra 'puzzle mode' options which stretch the gameplay, is basically it. Don't be fooled by the relatively simple appearance and technique of this game – it is without a doubt the most addictive and compelling puzzler the Saturn has yet seen.

OVERALL 92

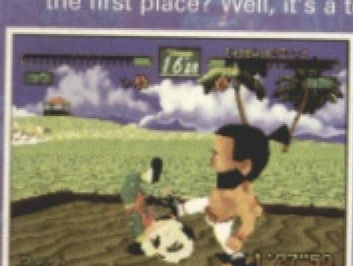
If you only buy one puzzle game, make it Bust-A-Move 2. So addictive it's frightening.

VIRTUA FIGHTER KIDS
SEGA
£29.99
1-2 PLAYERS
BEAT 'EM UP



OUT NOW

This is essentially a reworking of Virtua Fighter 2, itself the best 3D beat 'em on the face of the planet. So why is this worth investing in if a) You've already got Virtua Fighter 2 or b) You were never interested enough to buy it in the first place? Well, it's a tenner cheaper than most games for a start.



It's also the most advanced beat 'em up the Saturn has ever seen – VF Kids runs 20% faster than VF2, features mid-round replays, new combos and more camera angles and dramatic finishes. There's a lot to discover, and at this bargain price it's definitely worth going for if you haven't already got Virtua Fighter 2. If you have got VF2, VF Kids' new features might seem like garnish you can live without.

OVERALL 92

Bridges the gap until VF3, but some might be put off by the similarities to VF2 and the kitsch overload.

ALIEN TRILOGY
ACCLAIM
£44.99
1 PLAYER
DOOM



OUT NOW

You are the Alien films' heroine, Ripley, and you pursue your monstrous extraterrestrial quarry with an armoury of devastating weaponry. The gunplay is more spectacular, the explosions more impressive and the bloodbaths



even gorier, but the name of this game is essentially Doom. The corridor scenario is ideal for a recreation of the Alien films' combat sequences, and the lighting effects seen here contribute to a genuinely creepy atmosphere. Had this game appeared sooner it would have cornered a huge market, but Alien Trilogy is up against Exhumed and the forthcoming Hexen – both of which are more technically accomplished.

OVERALL 88

While still impressive and atmospheric, Alien Trilogy is fast becoming outclassed.

KEIO FLYING SQUADRON 2
JVC
£44.99
1 PLAYER
PLATFORM



OUT NOW

In an Out Now awash with mega games, Keio Flying Squadron 2 looks quite modest in comparison. While nothing groundbreaking, this is a frantic and completely bizarre platformer which is a lot more fun than rival titles like Astal, Gex and Johnny Bazookatone. Just about everything gets thrown into the technicolour mix here – underwater stages, rollercoaster sequences and puzzle sections stand alongside shooting levels that are familiar from the original



Keio game on Mega CD. This is really distinguished by its absolutely crazymadbonkers bosses which range from Sumo wrestlers with stalk eyes to a giant tractor-cum-bald bloke who's a bit mean with a paint bucket. Seasoned gamers might find this all a bit too kitsch and, more importantly, a bit too easy. If this doesn't put you off then you're in for a treat.

OVERALL 81

Junior gamers will go for Keio's colourful mix of game-styles and manga madness.

MEAN YOB

Can it really be six years since I started this lark? During that time I have read the sublime, the ridiculous, the mispelt toss and all other shades in between. My identity has remained the most closely guarded secret in game lore. But from next month, I won't be answering all the letters. You now have a choice. If you want to make a serious point to all or any of the team, write to them at MEAN MAIL, MEAN MACHINES SEGA, PRIORY COURT, 30-32 FARRINGDON LANE, LONDON, EC1R 3AU. If you want to have it out with me, write to YOB'S COLUMN at the same address.

PUT 'EM AWAY LOVE

Dear Yob,
The motivation for me writing this letter comes from an American TV documentary that I watched about the social impact of videogames. The programme interviewed psychologists, and people that play games. One psychologist said that the attraction of games is the fascination between death and resurrection, because you play your Mortal Kombats and Street Fighters, kill people, have it done to you, and yet you can put in



Our little fat French buddy Rayman and all his chums, as drawn by Chris Bell.

another pound, start a new game, and get your 'dead' character ressurected.
Playing a game is a very one-on-one affair, where you decide the outcome by reacting to the game's environment. This acts on your subconscious and tells you violence is acceptable, without you knowing. Apparently. At this point I was thinking that these people have a fair point, although I did not agree with their views that violent games cause people to be violent. Video games are an ESCAPE. They are not real, not to be taken seriously, and why haven't Tom and Jerry been condemned for the violence that is in their cartoons?
I discussed this programme with my parents, who did not wholly agree with me or the programme, but agreed that videogame violence does de-sensitise real violence. They said that a lot of people cannot differentiate between the violence in real life and the violence in games.
I had to get this off my chest, because it annoys me that people need something to blame for all the real life violence, and they choose games, whose sole purpose is to entertain.
Yours sincerely
Ben Tapp, Brighton

YOB: People have been punching each other's lights out from the time they discovered they had fists. We might seem to live in a violent society, but ours is one of the safest in the world. Really nasty living conditions seem to go hand in hand with aspects like poverty, prejudice and religious intolerance, all of which are more threatening than even the most violent videogame. There's an opposite view of the argument that says violence is 'catharsis', that means by the process of getting it out your system in a make-believe way, you lose the urge to do it in real life. You might use Japan as evidence of that. Tokyo has hundreds of arcades, but is a relatively safe city.



Leon of Thor (not pigfarmer) fame, by Davie Hay from Portnockie, Scotland.

RIGHT, TOERAG!

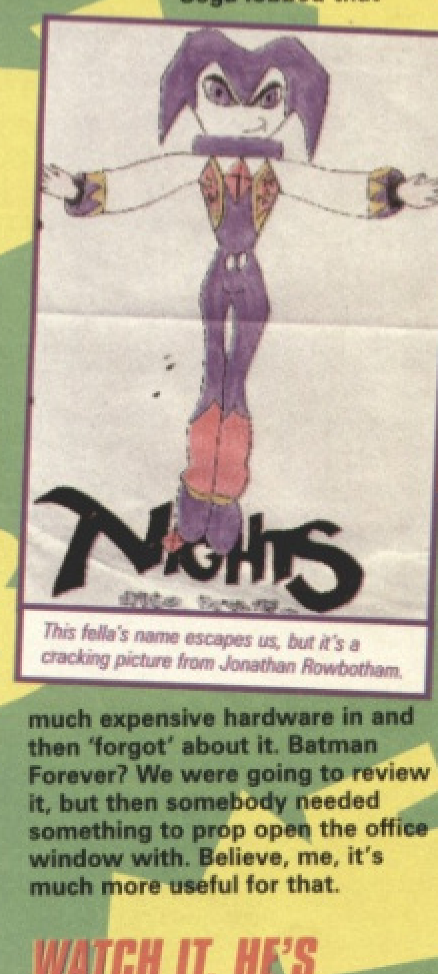
Dear Yob,
Samantha and Gemma my true loves
Skin sweeter than two doves
Kissing in the night with a soft candle light
We meet each other at half past six
Our love is like a ton of bricks
Your beautiful faces that everyone chases
Your [sic] sweeter than a choclate cake
That was a poem to the girls I fancy Samantha and Gemma Widowson.
From,
Martin King, Carlton Notts

YOB: What is this? It's not bloody I'm-Just-Seventeen-and-It's-Bliss and all that poncey crap. I'm missing any referencing to games in your poem, and you're using my page as some sort of contact act for a threesome. Pervert.

NOTHING WORSE THAN A BENT COPPER

Dear Yob,
Why does everyone seem to think the Saturn is the same as the PlayStation? They are completely different. The Saturn has three proccessing chips, the PlayStation only one. Also the Saturn has better 2D powers. My brother owns a Saturn and keeps his friends jealous with X-Men, and will make them cry on their knees when he gets UMK3.
Now Squaresoft have found several DSP's that Sega never said anything about, which means we haven't seen half of what the Saturn can do. So the Saturn is more powerful than the PlayStation. Comparing the Saturn to the PlayStation is like comparing the Spectrum to the STILL ALIVE C64. Also, what happened to your Batman Forever review on the Game Gear?
Ray Burt, Devon

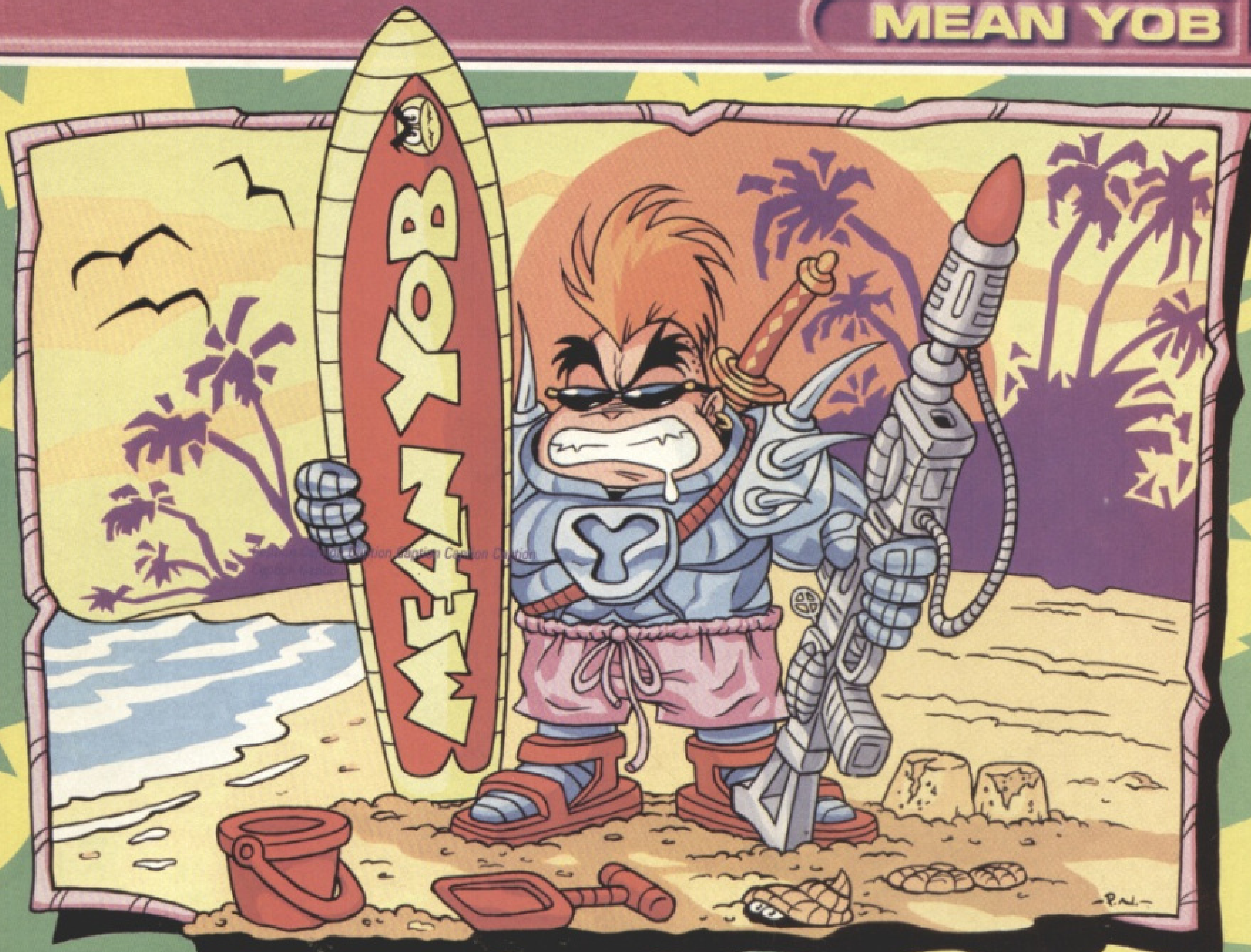
YOB: Does everyone think that? I couldn't give a toss about the average opinion of a Playstation owner. I wouldn't get that excited about the Squaresoft thing, it was just a rumour, and I hardly think Sega lobbed that much expensive hardware in and then 'forgot' about it. Batman Forever? We were going to review it, but then somebody needed something to prop open the office window with. Believe, me, it's much more useful for that.



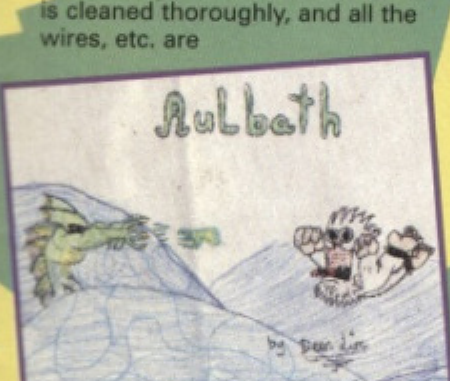
This fella's name escapes us, but it's a cracking picture from Jonathan Rowbotham.

WATCH IT, HE'S TOOLED UP!

Dear Yob,
I've been a big fan of your mag for ages now, and have written to you



with no reply, many times. Yet I forgive you for this mild crime.
I have a fear for my Saturn. Every now and again when I load a game the starter screen (grey with Sega Saturn) begin to flicker, with many lines flashing upon it. Then it cuts to the screen which you play music CDs on. You can't load the game. It's not dust, as I ensure my Saturn is cleaned thoroughly, and all the wires, etc. are connected.

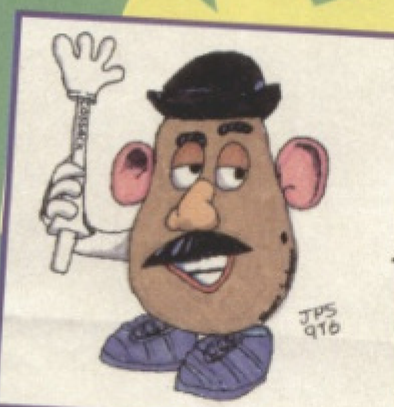


Dark Stalkers' tidal wave of terror by Deen Lim. Yeah, cute.

So what is it?
Also, just a couple of things I'd like to get sorted. My mate owns a PlayStation and is all wound up about games like Mortal Kombat Trilogy and Resident Evil. Will you please help me by telling me when these games will come out on the Saturn.
There a complete letter without insults. I hope this letter is answered, or I'll have to slit my wrists with frustration. No pressure.
See ya.
P.S. Please don't take the piss out of Emeny as it really winds me up.
Michael Emeny, Scunthorpe
YOB:Hold it with the butter knife, your letter is finally answered. Pity it's a bit of a crap letter to finally get a reply. Anyway, your Saturn problem is probably the mains connection. Ensure the lead is really far in. If it's not the lead it's probably just inside the machine, where the power is adapted. Unless it gets really frequent, I'd ignore it. You can get Ultimate MK now, which is better than PSX MK3, and Resident Evil 2 should be next year. Better still, get a copy of Fighting Vipers and rub their noses in it.

GO! GO! GO!

Dear Yob,
Why dos Sega allow naff games a release on their top console?
I mean, Mortal Kombat 2 – who needs it?
Too many bad games will send us back to the 16 bit days, and we all remember The Great Waldo Search and Incredible Hulk. The majority of toss games flop and push game prices up because companies need to recoup losses. One example of the past is Earthworm Jim selling poorly and Jurassic Park being a big hit. So come on Sega. Kill off the poo.
Lee Murphy, Merseyside
YOB:I think last year Sega were secretly happy for anyone bringing out Saturn games, even ones as bad as MK2 or Old Granny's Knackers Adventure. Now the quality threshold is much higher, and there's not very many truly tragic games. This all came about by Sony successsfully dissing the machine, and a few 'expert' opinions in the press from people who embrace corporate wisdom pretty glibly. With any luck, the days of poo are numbered.



Toy Story's Mr Potatohead dug up by Joseph Spademan from Liverpool. Ta!

YOU'RE LOOKING AT A LONG STRETCH

Dear Yob,
The best thing in the old Mean Machines was that you'd insult readers who asked for it. I'm asking for it. Do your worst.
Thank you very much, sir.
R. Swiper, Clacton
YOB:A message that warms my heart. They obviously still teach manners on Cackton-on-sewage. As a basis for a conversation, though, it doesn't offer much. Where's the sport in insulting the least significant pleb in the universe?

The Era of Yob as we have known him has now ended, but the era of MEAN MAIL is very much begun. First letter to head the all-new letters concept will get a mystery piece of old cack from Marcus' drawer.

Q&A

Time for more potato waffle to fill out these ridiculous protracted intro boxes. Must get Nick to do something about them for next issue. Actually, Q&A will be part of our pullout section as of next issue, with a new look and a new brief to answer even more of your letters, and less of my ramblings, with more chance of you getting into print. In the meantime, pay special attention to the reply to 'The Import Question' as it clears up the misconceptions surrounding adaptors and import discs many of you hold. Then send YOUR letter to: 'SHINY AND NEW Q&A', at the regular MEAN MACHINES address.

VIC AND BOB

Dear Gus,
Being as I'm going retro mad at the moment (you always were – DAN), please could you answer the following questions for me.
1. Having just bought Space Harrier on import for £55.00, and the Gradius Deluxe Pack for £60.00. Will these titles will be released in the UK, and if so, will they be at a budget price?
2. I'm also planning on buying Afterburner and Out Run (the greatest road racer EVER), but have read in C&VG that all the games will be released on one disk in the UK. Is this true?
3.Will they be converted to run full screen and full speed?
4.In last month's EDGE, they stated that Bubble Bobble and Rainbow Islands are only going to be released on the PC and PlayStation. Please tell me they are wrong, as these games still rank among the most playable platform games ever.
5.When will Daytona Deluxe be released?
6.Last of all, I've recently being playing this new Sega coin-op. I've forgotten what it's called, but you are in a helicopter and you shoot people Virtua Cop style whilst swooping and spinning all over the place. Is there any news of this game coming out for the Saturn?
Mr Rik Felton, Newcastle Upon Tyne

GUS:**1. Sucker! Space Harrier will be released on a single disc with Outrun and Afterburner too for probably £45 Gradius will never be released here.**
2. See qs. 1.
3. This is the current plan from Sega UK.
4. We reviewed the Bubble Bobble 2/Rainbow Islands pack last month — very nice and these were Saturn discs we reveiwed.
5. Late November/early December.
6. Gunblade N.Y. No news of a conversion but the pattern of arcade-Saturn is a well established one. Oh, Dan sends his love and asks if you're still a Michael 'King of Pop' Jackson fan. Aoiw!

HUDSON AND HALLS

Dear Gus,
Please will you answer the following questions, as it is vital for my world take-over plans next year.
1. Do you have a release date or price for the stunning Dark Saviour?
2. Have you heard anything about Gremlin's sequel to Loaded, Reloaded?
3. Any further news on Torico?
4. Will Capcom ever release Resident Evil? If so, when?
5. Any more news on Sonic X-treme or Bug Too?
6. Will you ever release a demo disk on the cover of your excellent mag?
7. Why are GT going to release Doom, even though it has been out classed, out done and overshadowed by several better games (Exhumed, Quake and Duke Nukem 3D)?
Finally, keep up the good work as this is a stunning magazine which I



would never miss.
Jamie Slater, Oxon

GUS:**1. Japan is out, with English conversion hopefully just before the year's out. Probably £50 for this epic game.**
2. It was planned to be a joint release, but only development on Playstation has actually started. But now Loaded has done better on Saturn than Gremlin predicted, this is 'under review'.
3. To be frank, no.
4. Apparently, Saturn goes straight to RE 2, but there is still no official Capcom word on this.
5. Sonic X-Treme as previously known is DEAD. Bug Too! has slipped back into development purgatory as the Americans seemingly get their house in order.
6. Next month, definitely next month!
7. GT is well aware that Doom has a loyal following and is a guaranteed money spinner. The Saturn only has Exhumed and Alien Trilogy at the moment. Thanks.

SAINT AND GREAVSIE

Dear Gus,
1. Are Sega going to ever release a decent tennis game for the Saturn?
2. In issue 47 when you had the preview of Actua Golf, you said there was an Actua Tennis later this year. Is it true?
3. Do you have a release date for Worldwide Soccer 97?
4. I have about £50 to spend on a game, which do you think I should get when they come out: NBA Action or Worldwide Soccer 97?
5. There are about 4-5 PlayStation mags and only one Saturn one. Why don't Mean Machines make one?
Thanks
Martin Liu, E. Sussex

GUS:**1. Sega themselves have no tennis projects, but Gremlin are in the early stages of creating Actua Tennis, and both Ocean and Telstar have games planned.**
2. See 1.
3. November is as specific as can be.
4. It has to be Worldwide (though NBA Action has been sorely underrated).
5.The Sega Saturn mag is our sister magazine and we both get on quite well as it is.

LAVERNE AND SHIRLEY

Dear Gus,
I've been writing to you for five months, without a reply. But I want you to answer some questions, so answer or my dog will eat you.
1. If the Saturn is 32-bit and so is the 32X, why don't people buy the £100 cheaper 32X?
2. I have got a Saturn with VF2, Sega Rally and Panzer Dragoon. I also have £95. What games should I buy?
3. My friend thinks Exhumed is possible on the Megadrive. Is he thick?
4. Did you know you look like Shun from VF2?
5. How much should I sell an unboxed Megadrive and an unboxed 32X for?
Peter Helts, Northampton



GUS:**1. Because the 32X is crap.**
2. Which is your favourite? If it's Rally, get Daytona CCE or maybe Wipeout. If it's VF2 get Fighting Vipers. If it's PD, get Panzer Dragoon 2. Also Bust-A-Move, NiGHTS, Worldwide Soccer, Tomb Raider etc.
3. Beyond thick. Dense.
4. No, because I don't. 5. £75.

BUB AND BOB

Dear Gus,
I've got a few questions to ask, so please could you answer them?
1. What's your best game for the Saturn?
2. When will Sonic X-Treme be released?
3. I've heard rumours that the Megadrive is going to die out. Is this true?
4. Is Daytona CCE going to be better than SEGA RALLY?

5. Do you think Whizz or Sonic 3D is best?
Lewis Marler (Age 11), Preston
GUS:**1. I like NiGHTS best.**
2. It's canned.
3. All machines go eventually.
4. As good as.
5. Sonic 3D.

MORK AND MINDY

Dear Gus,
1. Is UMK3 coming out on the Megadrive? Game Pro said it was a possibility and a mail order company has it listed.
2. Is MK4 going to be made? I heard that the graphics produced where not up to Williams standards and it was cancelled?
3. Is Marvel Super Heroes coming out on the Megadrive? It's coming out on the SNES.
4. How come only the Ultra 64 is getting Mortal Kombat 64? Mortal Kombat has never been restricted to certain systems before.
5. Will VF Animation on the Megadrive have Shun and Lion in it?
6. Which is the proper sequel to NBA JAM, NBA Hangtime or NBA Extreme?
Cheers
Iain Pankhurst, South Africa
GUS:**1. A US version is likely. I'm**



not convinced on the idea.
2. No real news on MK4, but I expect it will come, as night follows day.
3. Nope.
4. MK64 is just a clever way of doing MK on yet another format.
5. This is a matter of debate, and the reason why we haven't featured more on VF MD yet.
6. Both are.

PINKY AND THE BRAIN

Dear Gus,
I have a Sega Game Gear and I find it almost impossible to get games for it. I would be very grateful is you could give me a list of retailers or mail order companies that sell games for the Game Gear.
Miss E. MacRae, Ross-shire
GUS**Game and Electronic Boutique still carry some GG stuff, along with larger Virgins and HMVs. Few Mail Order shops carry large stocks, but try ACE Consoles 0171 439 1185. Check your local paper small ads and our Megamart pages.**

SID AND NANCY

Dear Gus,
Please answer some questions for me.
1. When is Football Manager coming out on the Saturn?
2. Any other footie management sims expected?
3. When can we expect Duke Nukem 3D?
4. Finally, Euro 96 is so overrated. OK, it looks brill, but it plays like s**t!!!
Geo, Glasgow
GUS:**1. No one's expecting it.**
2. Nope.
3. Middle of next year.
4. Euro wasn't quite as good as we thought, but it's still good.

THE IMPORT QUESTION

Dear Gus,
I am a new Saturn owner. I also own a Sony PlayStation, but am not writing for that. I'm writing because I'm a bit puzzled.
1. I'm going to buy a convertor to play Jap and US games but will they still run at a quicker speed than British?
2.What is the best TV for use with the Saturn plus for the above question?
3. If I was playing the UK version of VF2 on a scart system, would the Jap or US version run faster?
It would be helpful if you could answer these puzzling questions
Steven Brown, Scotland
GUS:**1. No, your UK machine will run at 50Hz.**
2. One with a SCART input for a clear picture. As your machine runs at 50, you won't have a problem with picture



compatability.
3. No let me sort this for you. When the machine is manufactured, it's configured for the territory it will be sold in (all are made in Asia). Machines that go to the UK are configured to run at 50Hz, so they will work with PAL system TVs, using the old-style round aerial connection.



Changing the machine to work at 60Hz is relatively simple, it does not require major engineering, but it's best to give it to a shop which specialises in converting machines. You can get a switch fitted to flick between 50 and 60 Hz (£50-£70). If you choose to get a cartridge adaptor (£20-£30) it will not change the speed of your machine — 50Hz only. This means Japanese games will play slower and on a smaller screen than intended — which should make you consider waiting for the PAL versions. These are on average six weeks to two months behind and Sega adapt them to run faster on the slower PAL machine.

SALLY AND JAKE

Dear Gus,
Could you please answer these questions.
1. My mate said UMK3 is coming out on the Megadrive. Is this true?
2. How did you rate Chaotix and Metal Head on the 32X?
3. Which is better – Earthworm Jim 1 or 2?
4.Will there be any more Strike games on the Megadrive?
5. When is Segaworld opening? Why don't you do a feature on it?
6. Which is better, Vampire Hunter or UMK3?
7.Why is Baku Baku coming out on the Game Gear and not the Megadrive?
8. Any news on Sonic Fighters?



Thomas Prior, Dagenham
GUS:**1. See above.**
2. Chaotix is lame, Metal Head slightly better.
3. Jim 2.
4. No.
5. We have, in issue 44. Segaworld haven't supplied us with more info. It opened September 7th.
6. Vampire Hunter.
7. I don't know, it's not fair.
8. The arcade version is finished and looks good. Saturn conversion is definite – I estimate March 97.

Things may change as of next month, but Q&A stays the same. We'll be answering even more queries, so write now.

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WANTED : Putty Squad for Megadrive. Good condition. Will pay any reasonable price. Tel: (0117) 9552613 after 5pm and ask for Tom

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MD GAMES FOR sale : Pitfighter + Golden Axe (£5 each), MK1 (£8), MK (£15). 32X (£40), Virtua Fighter (32X) (£25) . 32X + VF (£60). Phone Jim : (01223) 369379 if interested.

SELL 3X DOOM/Metal Head £14 or swap for Shining Force CD. Megadrive immortal / Talmits £9, Robocod £6. Swap Willy Beamish (Sega CD) For Lunar 1-2 / Popful Mail / Vay / Dungeon Master (Skullkeep) or Monkey Island (All CD) Tel: (01203) 257683

AMIGA 500 1MG With Printer and stand with 50 discs and mouse £150 ono Phone (01296) 4357322 after 4.30pm.

FOR SALE : Virtua Cop (£25) and Daytona USA (£15). Perfect condition. Tel : (0181) 459 4152 ask for David.

WANTED : CANNON Fodder for Megadrive. Willing to pay up to £35 Also 10-12 year old Pen-Pal Phone : (01491) 573083 Ask for Richard.

FOR SALE ! GAME Gear with 9 games, Game Genie, Battery pack, wide screen, car adaptor and carry case. £60 or swap for Megadrive. Tel: Andrew on (01932) 867172.

MEGADRIVE, 32X, including pads (six button), 16 Games, including Virtua Fighter, FIFA 96, Metal Head for 32X and 12 Megadrive games including Toy Story, MM96, FIFA 96, Mortal Kombat 1,2 & 3, Sonic 1,2 & 3, Sonic & Knuckles, Theme Park, all for £270 Phone Matthew (01837) 52363 after 7pm.

Phantasy Star III and Landstalker wanted for Megadrive, also Shining Force for Mega CD phone Gary 0121 5030308 West Midlands.

MD for sale with 15 games (inc. 6 game cart and Menacer) eg. Super SF2, Micro Machines 96. Comes with youpad and joystick but MD not boxed. Worth £400 but will sell for £140 Call Faheem after 7.30pm on (01706) 660170

Mega CD1 with CDX and Prince of Persia and Sherlock Holmes 2 £60 01905 619976 Ask for Tom

Mega Drive Plus over 20 games Sonic 1 to Sonic and Knuckles, Mortal Kombat 2 and 3, Micro Machines 96, Plus a Menacer and 4 Joypads all worth over £500 Will sell for £170 Contact Jonathan on Dumbarton (01389) 730708

SWAP Desert Strike (MD) for MK2 (MD) phone (01386) 48351, Ask for Tom.

Mega Drive and 32X, 4 Joypads (SG Propad and 6 Button), 21 games (+91%) including Virtua Fighter, Doom, VR, Sonic 1,2,3, Dynamite Headdy, Theme Park, SF2, MK2. Excellent condition, All boxed / instructions. £375 ono. (RRP £1190). phone (01924) 848878

WANTED: Premier Manager. will pay up to £40 phone Alex on 01403 730018 (Barns Green West Sussex) Format: Mega Drive

Mega Drive games for sale, Theme Park, FIFA 95, Eternal Champions, Sonic and Knuckles, Streets of Rage 2, Sonic 2, Speedball 2, Fantasia, Altered Beast. All £10 each phone Bob on 0181 925 1208

Mega Drive 2 with 3 control pads, one 6 button, two 3 buttons and six games Ristar, Sonic 2, Micro Machines '96, 3 more games, the lot £250 o.v.n.o. Tel: 0113 250 4050 after 6.30pm - 9.30pm

Mega Drive + Mega CD for sale, 25 games. Top games. will sell for £175 contact Brett on (01522) 545511

Mega Drive 2 excellent condition with box and manual, two control pads, six games including mega games 2, £105 o.n.o. (01248) 680553

I am looking for a pen pal who likes game gears and has got one of his or her own, call Lee on 01538 384359

WANTED: Pushover for PC will pay reasonable prices contact William on (01622) 871816 if not buy, temporary swap.

Super Monaco Grand Prix wanted for Mega Drive Tel: (01363) 82530 ask for Fabien



NEW MEAN MACHINES
NEW DANGER
Let the competition crap themselves. Next month is the fiftieth issue of MEAN MACHINES, and it's all change here at EMAP Towers. All the old rubbish has been turfed out (that includes Marcus and Claire). You must get next month's landmark epoch-making issue with its cool new look, and as an added enticement, we're giving away a Saturn disc with PLAYABLE demos of the hottest games of the year*. And who could be more suitable to front the New Face of MEAN MACHINES than Shiny Entertainment, who will be revealing their blockbusting new platformer for '97, Wild 9. Don't miss it.
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*Limited number of disc issues subject to availability. UK Mainland only. Promotion subject to change without notice.



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